BUILDING CAPACITY FOR REGENERATION

Making sense of ambiguity
in urban policy outcomes

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ABSTRACT

UK regeneration exists amid a 'burgeoning' literature which states the ongoing desire to improve the outcomes of urban policy. However, concern about the symbolic nature of regeneration policy and its re-production in the form of 'linguistic debates', can latterly be witnessed in the context of more 'discursive' concerns rooted in shifting patterns of governance. Drawing empirically from research with fifty UK regeneration professionals and Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony to explore reasons for the persistence of such ambiguity, three rival discourses emerge in the form of 'Building City Regions'; 'Narrowing the Gap'; and 'Building Community Capacity'. What a critical analysis suggests is that by 'deconstructing' rather than 'deciphering' the goals of regeneration policy, a temporary 'discursive' form of regeneration emerges in which the contradictions and tensions *within* the discourse are represented in the form of 'nodal points and floating signifiers' and articulated through the notion of lack. This can be linked to the bureaucratic struggles which emerge as a result of a 'new right' hegemony, which commodifies all aspects of work and social life to bring market-informed ways of seeing and doing to every aspect of regeneration practice. Actors seek to manage such complexity through emotional investment.

DEDICATION

For Lisa

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND & STRUCTURE OF THESIS

"Correlative links between poor housing and poor health have been well known for many years. A problem for urban studies, however, is that the supposed causal relationships underlying this correlation are ill-understood and only weakly established. Hence the expectation that housing improvement will lead to a corresponding change in the health of the community (and therefore of individuals) has little causal support and remains an assumption". Allen (1998)

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

There is a large body of evidence across the several disciplines of urban geography, public policy and public health which questions why, despite an ongoing programme of evaluation, the outcomes of contemporary UK regeneration policy remain vague and in some cases negative (Atkinson 2000a, Lees & Ley 2008, Thomson et al 2006, Thomson 2008, Parry et al 2004, Allen 1998, Rhodes et al 2005). As a result some have begun to question how it is that despite some 50 years of urban policy we continue to know so little of the way in which it seeks to tackle deprivation or indeed 'why urban policy won't go away' (Lawless 1989, Wilks-Heeg 1996, Mossberger & Stoker 1997, Atkinson 2000a, Henderson et al 2007).

Stone (2002) suggests that the gap which emerges between policy intentions and outcomes forms as a result of policy paradox based on an over reliance on rational policy statements which ignores the inherently human values bound up in goals such as equity, freedom and liberty. However, whilst social constructivist approaches offer a useful means of surfacing the implicit assumptions in actors' narrative, critiques suggest that they fail to account for the formation of paradox. In seeking to understand 'why urban policy won't go away' (Mossberger & Stoker 1997) other explanations note the way that dominant ideologies have sought to frame the urban policy debate by shaping how policy problems have become defined (Wilks-Heeg 1996, Atkinson 2000a, Brannan, John and Stoker 2006).

However, critiques of traditional and managerialist forms of governance have suggested that such explanations fail to take account of more contemporary forms of deliberation involving pluralist approaches to discourse (Raco 2005, Jonas and Ward 2007, McCann 2007). Indeed, Diamond & Liddle (2005) note how Urban Renaissance, with its transformation of urban governance through partnerships and joined up working, has left actors having to make sense of these new forms of governance. This thesis argues that in the context of emerging post-modern forms of governance, critical theories of discourse analysis offer a more useful means of surfacing the existence of multiple realities where meaning is unfixed due to inherent tensions and contradictions. The application of such an approach to the study of UK regeneration policy failure stems from wider concern that despite much theoretical and empirical debate about the value of critical approaches in the policy science literature, the methodological issues have often tended to be overlooked (Howarth & Torfing 2005, p2). More specifically, because of an emerging need to explore the impact of political and institutional change on outcomes for urban policy (D'Albergo 2010). In the face of ongoing ambiguity in UK regeneration policy and the limited capacity of interpretive approaches to resolve this, one is drawn to consider the value of critical approaches to the study of regeneration policy in addressing not only *why* such ambiguity might occur, but also *how* actors involved in the delivery of regeneration attempt to manage and make sense of this increasing complexity (Diamond & Liddle 2005).

BACKGROUND TO THESIS

In making sense of such ambiguity, one suggestion is that we should be critical of the objectives of regeneration and not assume that the goals being pursued are necessarily rational, reasonable or valid ones (Atkinson 2000a). Such claims highlight the need for more

narrative approaches in 'deciphering' the goals of regeneration using social constructivist approaches. With this in mind, the original aim of this doctoral research was initially to explore the value of such alternative approaches in deciphering the goals of regeneration and subsequent policy paradox. Hence an exploratory first phase of research sought to employ an interpretive approach based around Yanow's (1996, 2000) theory of sense making). The initial aim here, was to surface the symbolic artifacts (that is the language, objects and acts) employed by actors involved in the *implementation* of regeneration policy in an attempt to examine how they understood such potential *policy failure* in terms of the unintended consequences that are produced (*policy effects*) and how they negotiated these effects in the context of *policy change* (see appendix for Stage 1 methodology). Findings showed the value of such interpretive approaches in surfacing differences in the ways that different policy communities 'saw and did' regeneration practice, and how these differences might lead to problems (see appendix for Stage 1 Findings).

However, despite this useful endeavor, questions still remained about the reasons for such the persistence of such ambiguity; that is, *why* such ambiguity occurred and *how* actors continued to deliver regeneration in the face of such apparent failure. This was confirmed by reviews of the policy science literature exploring the limited role of social constructivist approaches in explaining how ambiguity might occur as a result of the way that policy problems are framed (see chapters 2&3). As a consequence of this early exploratory phase, a much broader question emerged, built around not so much *how* symbolic policy was produced, but *why* it continued to persist in the negation of outcomes. Reviews of the critical geography literature highlighted the notion of tensions and contradictions in policy (Raco 2005, Jonas and Ward 2007, McCann 2007). This brought to the fore contemporary

debates in political science about the ability of dominant ideologies to explain the ongoing ambiguity of urban policy outcomes, and the value of post-structural approaches in explaining them (Howarth 2000, Howarth & Torfing 2005, Hansen and Sorenson 2005) (See chapter 4).

Hence, the findings of the first stage of this doctoral programme research led to a refinement of the original research questions through the more critical lens of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony. With this, the aim of the second phase of research was to apply critical approaches to policy analysis to explore the extent to which the ambiguity surrounding urban policy goals, including the symbolic aspects of policy and their unintended consequences might be experienced as tensions and contradictions. In keeping with complaints about a methodological deficit (Howarth 2000), further work was then done to explore the degree to which such contradictions and tensions were constitutive of hegemonic 'lack', and how actors might subsequently manage this lack by drawing emotionally on an affective realm.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The current **Chapter 1** provides an overview of the nature of the research problem, proposing a framework by which these issues might be usefully discussed within the confines of the doctoral thesis. This short chapter also explains how the planned methodology employed at the start of this research underwent a radical shift in emphasis from an interpretive approach to a more critical one upon discovering the limited capacity of the former to explain why policy ambiguity might occur. This decision was informed by feedback from presentations of this doctoral work at a number of departmental seminars

and conferences, both internally and externally, over the lifetime of this programme of doctoral research. One in particular, which took place at an interpretivist network at the University of Edinburgh, further confirmed the need to consider the 'so what' issue associated with surfacing narratives without any recourse to the sociopolitical context in which they occur. This resulted in a strategic decision early on in the research, to adopt a more critical approach to understanding ambiguity in urban policy context and explore how any tensions and contradictions which are produced might be managed affectively. What now follows, is a brief overview of the thesis structure, and a summary of the main content of each chapter.

Chapter 2 explores some of the burgeoning literature surrounding the alleged failure of UK urban policy to tackle the root causes of deprivation from the perspective of urban geography, public policy and public health. Evidence is drawn from an array of government policy documents, empirical studies and reviews of the literature involving Neighbourhood Renewal policy, Urban Renaissance Policy and Local Economic Development Policy and seeks to show a confusing terrain, in which the outcomes of regeneration activity ultimately remain ambiguous. In doing so, the chapter examines the extent to which the ongoing failure of UK regeneration policy is rooted in an over rational analysis of urban policy goals in the past. Based on this analysis, conclusions are drawn about the possible role of alternative approaches to policy analysis in surfacing the hidden assumptions which might be driving the goals of regeneration. The chapter begins by reviewing traditional policy analysis and its tendency to produce rational policy outcomes. This is then followed by a review of the 'micro' level literature from two major policy areas; Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban Renaissance in which an attempt is made to unpick the underlying assumptions

behind policy claims as a means of demonstrating differences in interpretation about the nature and cause of deprivation. Based on this analysis, findings are discussed in the context of potential alternative approaches in considering the role that sense making might play in analysing policy goals which have a more ambiguous content.

Chapter 3 explores the value of alternative approaches to policy analysis as a means of better explaining the persistence of ambiguity in urban policy. Drawing on evidence from the policy sciences, the chapter explores the background to the claim that policy is 'framed' by the ideological and political narrative at the time and how this produces policy goals which have a rather 'symbolic' nature rather than an 'actual' one in producing any 'real' outcomes (Atkinson 2000a p:230). After providing a brief explanation of the nature of framing in the context of wider theories of governance, the chapter goes on to consider the extent to which past UK urban policy goals might have been framed over time. In the context of more recent debate about the currency of so called dominant ideologies in more pluralist and complex societies, the chapter concludes by highlighting the need for more critical approaches in helping to explain why such symbolic policy is produced and how indeed actors might seek to manage this in an increasingly complex policy environment.

In the context of limited explanations by interpretive approaches to policy analysis, **Chapter 4** explores the value of adopting a more critical approach to discourse as means of explaining why such ambiguity might persist. The chapter begins by introducing the different approaches to discourse analysis in the context of shifting conceptions about the meaning of society. In an attempt to explore some of the potential uses and limitations of more post-structuralist approaches to discourse analysis, the discussion moves to explore

the application of critical approaches in the context of other policy areas, before making the point that despite an emergence of critical approaches in broader areas of policy, there is little extant research which seeks to apply this to the empirical study of urban policy in practice.

Chapter 5 presents an overview and rationale of the methods selected to undertake a critical analysis of ambiguity in urban policy. The chapter begins by stating of the aims of stage 2 research along with a re-interpretation of the original RQ set out in stage 1. This is based on assessing the value of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack in seeking to better explain both 'why such paradox occurs' and how actors cope by drawing on the affective realm. After a brief consideration of the epistemological nature of discourse analytic approaches, the chapter considers the basis for selecting a post-structuralist approach to discourse analysis as a methodology. Practical issues are then considered in terms of operationalising the research along with any ethical implications. Specific details here include the decision to adopt a regional case study design and the recruitment of fifty actors from a much wider area of regeneration practice involving Neighbourhood Renewal and Economic Development policy areas. The chapter ends with a description of the theoretical framework selected which sought to operationalise Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack and the realm of the affective.

Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 - Having already laid the foundations in terms of the rationale for undertaking a more critical approach in earlier chapters, Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 seek to present the findings from the empirical research with fifty UK regeneration practitioner involved in the 'design, delivery and management' (Diamond & Liddle 2005) of regeneration

practice in the West Midlands Region. This series of chapters seek to provide a detailed discussion of differences in the nature of each of the three discourses to emerge and any associated contradictions and tensions which were seen to emerge *within.* In keeping with Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of social hegemony, examples of discursive lack are discussed in terms of their emergence as nodal points and floating signifiers which served to give the discourse form, and the affective (or emotional) realm which served to give the discourse its subsequent force.

Chapter 10 - In keeping with the aims of this doctoral research to explore the reasons for persistence ambiguity in regeneration policy, Chapter 10 returns to the original research questions set at the start of this Doctoral thesis, to explore;

- To what extent are the symbolic aspects of regeneration policy representative of the contradictions and tensions identified in Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack (RQ 1);

- To what extent are such contradictions and tensions constitutive of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack rooted in hegemonic struggle? (RQ 2)

The basis of the discussion subsequently focuses on drawing parallels between the empirical data surfaced in the form of three discourses; 'city regions'; 'narrowing the gap'; and 'building community capacity' and the existing literature described in earlier reviews of the literature to reach conclusions about the way that contemporary regeneration practice might be operating in the context of shifting patterns of governance. Based on the suggestion that the unintended and symbolic aspects of UK regeneration policy are more to do with the contradictions and tensions associated with Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of

hegemonic lack than any notion of institutional framing, **Chapter 11** attempts to draw some conclusions based on UK regeneration as a discursive construction. This is followed by a summary of the main recommendations which spring from this original research, and a précis of the main empirical, theoretical and policy contributions implied.

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES OF POLICY MAKING, AMBIGUITY AND ASSUMPTIONS OF
REGENERATION POLICY

During the past 25 years, there has been an extensive use of Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) to regenerate run-down areas in many countries. However, despite their increased popularity, evidence on their success in helping to turn around depressed areas remains elusive. The evidence base has been constrained by inadequate understanding of the theory of change behind the policy intervention, insufficient development of evaluation theory and method and a lack of information about the impact of the interventions on the key outcomes that they are designed to affect (Rhodes, Tyler & Brennan 2005, p1919).

INTRODUCTION

Historically, empirical questions about the intentions of regeneration policy have arisen in the context of a limited knowledge about the mechanisms by which urban policy seeks to tackle the root causes of deprivation (Lawless 1989, Atkinson & Moon 1994, Roberts & Sykes 1999). For instance, in exploring the role that housing plays in tackling deprivation Kleinman and Whitehead (1999) concluded by showing how "current policy and analysis has helped to clarify the nature of the problem – [but] it has yet little or no idea how to alleviate it effectively" (p86). However for Stone (2002), the ambiguity surrounding policy goals results from the failure of traditional approaches to policy analysis (or TPA) to take account of human values associated with policy goals, such as efficiency and liberty. This suggests that the issue is less to do with whether or not policy goals are failing and more to do with the different ways in which policy goals are conceptualized and understood (Yanow, 1996; 2000). This suggestion is premised on a critique of traditional policy analysis, which critics argue, seeks to neutralize the process of policy making by ignoring the democratic public voice (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003, pxiii). The basis of this critique rests on suggestions that

instead of asking 'how have decisions been made, policy analysts would be better placed in asking 'what values are driving this process' and what assumptions are being made.

The following chapter explores the substantive nature of UK regeneration policy goals in terms of the outcomes produced and considers the extent to which such ambiguity is a feature of key regeneration policy. The chapter begins by outlining briefly what is meant by 'traditional policy analysis', in the context of ongoing efforts to better understand how policy is made and implemented. This is then used as a basis for critique about the overly rational processes involved in policy making and how this might contribute to certain assumptions about the types of outcomes it is possible to produce. On the basis of this critique, attention is turned to surfacing some of the rational assumptions in UK regeneration policy to consider the areas where ambiguity has arisen and the extent to which this may have led to the potential negation of policy outcomes in some areas of practice. In light of this, the final section concludes by considering the utility of alternative approaches to policy analysis involving an interpretive approach which seeks to surface the way the policy problems are being understood.

RATIONAL APPROACHES TO POLICY ANALYSIS

That policy is an essentially 'sequential' process involving the rational selection of objectives, the assessment of possible courses of action and their subsequent implementation, is a well known maxim and can be found in any number of classic texts detailing the process of the policy cycle (John 1998). Hill and Hupe (2009) trace the contributions of proponents of a stagist approach including Simon (1945), Lasswell (1956), Jenkins (1978) and Hogwood & Gunn (1984) in their attempts to describe how policy

problems are formed and potential solutions reached. Colebatch (2000) and John (1998) both note how policy issues become recognised by policymakers, how decisions are made and how they subsequently get implemented:

> "the straightforward idea is that policy emerges from the inter-relationships between intentions and actions of political participants. Citizens elect politicians to carry out policy platforms. Politicians create programmes for bureaucrats to implement. Senior bureaucrats order lower level officials to carry out policy decisions. Central governments tell local government what to do, and so on..." (John 1998, p23).

Theories about what happens in the process between the initial stages of policy expectations and the perceived outcomes of policy have been discussed at length in the policy sciences in terms of policy implementation (De Leon 1999 In: Hill and Hupe 2009). Traditional approaches to policy analysis advocate that the process of policy making follows a somewhat linear cycle, building in opportunities for learning and feedback as suggested in figure 1.
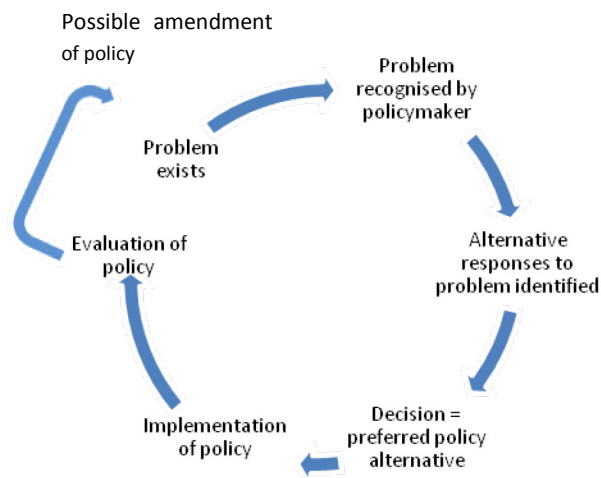
FIGURE 1: THE STAGIST MODEL OF THE POLICY PROCESS, ADAPTED FROM COLEBATCH (2000)

Taking into account such considerations about the linear way in which policy is implemented, John (2005) notes the reasons for the likely appeal of such a rational approach; noting the design of the democratic legislature involving politicians and civil servants in the electoral cycle with their respective claims to listen and act upon policy problems within a given time-frame; the desire of the media and lay public to reduce the complexity of policy by simplifying policy problems into 'stories' with beginnings, middles and ends; and ideologically in seeking to demonstrate success in the eyes of the electorate through 'causal stories' which have demonstrable means and ends (p24). Such approaches highlight the importance of planning for the implementation phase in 'getting the design right' so that policy intentions 'turn into actions' (Mazmannian and Sabatier 1983, p20 in: John 1998). These approaches also imply that it is possible to intervene at different points in order to change policy. Indeed, Hill (2005) notes how 'it is often thought that if the right policies could be found and their design difficulties solved, then progress would be made towards the solutions of societies problems' (Hill 2005, p6). However, following Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) seminal work on implementation failure, the suggestion that differences might exist in policymakers intentions in comparison to what was achieved on the ground, led to concern about the way that actors interpret the meaning of policy (Hill and Hupe 2009).

Noting the capacity for policy outcomes to have 'intentions, actions and inactions' suggests that there is an important role for actors to play in shaping the success of policy goals (Hogwood & Gun In: Hill & Hupe 2009, p4). Hill and Hupe (2004) agree with this need for a more 'interpretive edge' whilst stressing the continuing role that factual knowledge generation should play in policy analysis (Hill and Hupe 2009, p11). As a result they

maintain a strong commitment to an 'empirical cycle' within policy analysis, constituting different parts of knowledge accumulation; that is with the early parts focusing on problem definition and hypothesis generation and the later parts relying on a more 'interpretive approach' based on listening and reflexivity in order for actors to be able to make sense of information and 'formulate advice' (Hill and Hupe 2009, p14). They go on to suggest that whether the epistemological basis of policy analysis is rational or not is ultimately about whether the behaviour of public officials can be controlled through rule and law (i.e. bureaucracy theory) or whether officials need to use 'their discretion to interpret and modify the impact of the law' (p25).

Such debate about the influence of actors' perceptions in the policy process is embodied in a gradual shift towards an 'argumentative turn' in the policy sciences which begins to highlight the important role that language plays in the policy process (Fischer and Forrester 1993). Indeed, Dryzek (1993) shows how although the universal logic of scientific enquiry implies that science is built on an assumption of 'unambiguous establishment of causal relationships' (p213), this can be witnessed in a broad shift towards an argumentative turn in which the rules of human behaviour are not fixed and predictable, but seek to negotiate and deliberate based on normative rather than neutral judgments. It is with such interpretation in mind, that the discussion now turns to considerations of the nature of these alternative approaches and the contribution they have made to better understanding the more deliberative way in which policy is made.

AMBIGUITY IN POLICY OUTCOMES

The likelihood that policy outcomes might require less of a rational analysis and more of an 'interpretive' approach has been highlighted by much ongoing work in the policy sciences to explore the implicit meaning of policy. Perhaps most notable is Stone's (2002) work around *Policy Paradox* based on critique of the so called 'rationality project' in which she suggests that traditional 'policy is made on the assumption that rational choice drives self interest, but reality is rather more complex'. In acknowledging the human dimension of policy goals, Stone (2002) draws attention to the importance of values in the framing and evaluation of policy and how these are dependent on the socio-political context. Indeed, Stone (2002) notes how 'each of the analytic standards that we use to set goals, define problems and judge solutions is politically constructed and there is no gold standard of equity, efficiency, social measurement, causation, effectiveness or anything else'. To demonstrate, Stone (2002) uses the notion of equity as an example, by asking how 'in terms of goods, services, wealth and income, health and illness, opportunity and disadvantage'; we decide who gets what? Using an analogy of sharing out a cake with her students, she shows how because the goal of equity is fundamentally about the concept of distribution and relies on notions of fairness; it is difficult to divide the cake fairly when opinions differ so widely about what access to opportunity; status; gender; preference; and availability' should actually look like (p40).

Yanow (1996) echoes the importance of analysing the values of policy by stating how 'too much of policy analysis, implementation studies and descriptions of the policy process is shaped by the assumption that all human interaction is literal and instrumentally rational' (Yanow 1996, p8). In her book '*How does a policy mean?*' she notes the importance of

human perception in guiding how agencies state problems and solutions and suggests that as humans we interpret the world around us using past experience, training and insight. In doing so, Yanow suggests that instead of being able to measure outcomes through traditional policy analysis, it is more likely that policy problems might actually be interpreted differently by actors in different contexts. Consequently, Yanow argues that by exploring the hidden rituals and symbols and understandings that actors express through 'what they say and do' it is possible to surface the implicit 'values, beliefs and feelings that a group holds, believes in and practices' (Yanow 2000, p15). Yanow refers to this understanding in terms of tacit knowledge, and suggests that instead of conducting rational policy analysis to judge 'what a policy means', instead we should seek to understand 'how a policy means' by exploring the human dimension in terms of how different groups of actors make sense of policy differently based on their past knowledge and experience.

Stone (2002) considers how as a result of this shift in focus, it is possible to focus on the hidden symbolism in policy and the role it plays in mediating the meaning of policy (p137). Such symbolism, she suggests is featured in the form of four constituents; that is narrative stories which embody taken for granted assumptions of 'how the world works'; synecdoche's or figures of speech in policy in which a small issue is representative of a larger one; metaphors or 'a likeness between two things'; and ambiguity or the ability of policy to hold dual meanings.

In seeking to demonstrate how these 'taken for granted assumptions' about how the world works in policy practice, or how such 'figures of speech', 'metaphors' or 'dual meanings' might manifest, Yanow (1995) presents an editorial discussing the practices of policy

interpretation in technology policy in surfacing assumptions. She notes how, as a result, all such studies share 'a concern with meaning'; 'diversity in approach' and ultimately assume a social constructivist starting point (p111). In one paper, Hofman (1995) shows how assumptions about the leaders of technological innovation (bound up in the German government's belief about the nature of competitive relations between universities and the business sector) led to misunderstandings about the role of universities as the 'giver of technology' (p137):

> "According to this construct, termed the 'cascade model' by Hack (1988), the cradle of new technologies is situated in the laboratories of basic research institutions and universities. The business community, according to the next assumption, takes up this knowledge – seen as a freely tradable and transferable good – and translates it through applied research and/ or development into innovations i.e. marketable products." (p130)

However, by exploring the narratives of staff working within universities and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the tool and dye industry, Hofman (1995) found that instead of universities being at the cutting edge of new technology development, they were actually operating on the periphery, owing to the limited ability of businesses to commission external research to universities and because of the financial risk involved. As a result, in reality it was actually businesses that emerged as the 'technological innovators' rather than universities. This was because of their need to continually 'road-test' different aspects of production on an ongoing basis. This suggested that instead of the competitive relationship implied by German government in their stated technology policy, in reality the relationship

between universities and business operated on a more mutual exchange. Alternatively, universities were able to offer much more cost-effective research to companies over the longer term (i.e. through less risky ventures) because they were not subject to the same degree of market competition that other firms were exposed to.

Contrary to the assumptions in German government policy in this case, instead of universities being at the cutting edge of innovation, there was a much more collaborative process in operation where businesses offered various 'hand-me-downs' to universities in the form of used specialist equipment which was surplus to requirement. In conclusion, Hofman (1995) exposes the ultimate paradox here, where: 'those whose job it is to develop and sell technology are observed to have a different understanding than those responsible for the administrative promotion of technological change (i.e. governments) (p142). In short, what this valuable study reveals is how the 'internal logic' of government serves to conceal the 'real' endeavor by universities, *not* to act as technological innovators though world class research but, who instead seek to interact with business on the basis of earned income based on an awareness of their 'real' commercial value (p140).

In another study seeking to highlight the potentially symbolic nature of policy, Colebatch (1995) discusses the rather ambiguous notion of 'programme evaluation'. He shows how, as an organisational phenomenon, programme evaluation is grounded in taken-for-granted assumptions about the rational nature of organisations and how they operate as implementers of policy. Colebatch notes how:

- *"Policy is about problem solving* – It is assumed that we have policies because there are problems that need to be solved and these problems are independent of the structures created to deal with them.

- *Policy centres on intentions and choices* – Authorised leaders are seen as confronting these problems by clarifying their intentions about the preferred outcomes, and making choices about the course of action to be taken in order to get there.

- *Organisations exist to give effect to policy intentions* – Organisations are seen as the instruments of policy makers created to give effect to their intentions...in other words, their 'raison d'etre'.

- *Policy is expressed through programmes* – In order to implement policy, organisational activity is (or ought to be) gathered into programmes, which express more specifically the intentions of the policy makers.

- *Programmes are evaluated in terms of intentions and outcomes* – since programmes are seen as arising from the intentions of policy makers to solve problems, these can be evaluated in terms of the correlation between the problems, the intentions and the outcomes." *(Adapted from Colebatch 1995, p149)*

The implication that policy is filled with such 'taken for granted assumptions' lies in reminding us of the need to resist the urge to rush to interpretation by listening carefully to the various stories which are invoked by different policies, and to use this as a prelude to becoming aware of the way that theories might serve to focus our attention on some things at the expense of others (Forrester 1993 In: Fischer & Forrester 1993, p187). For example, Forrester (1993) talks about the way in which planners and analysts make policy when they 'talk and listen to others talk', through the stories they tell one another (p188). He goes on

to show how in doing so, we use stories to build moral claims/ arguments to support a particular position, as a means of making sense of injustices and issues and to justify a particular course of action. According to Forrester (1993), this is inherently bound up in the traditional culture and professional background from which these actors emerge, as he describes here:

> "We can think of listening in on a staff meeting as a way getting inside the organisational mind of the planners, getting to know both how they perceive the situation they're in and how they begin to act on the problems they face" (Forrester 1993, p192)

The role that such stories seem to play in making sense of policy suggests that there is much to be gained from seeking views about the nature and success of policy goals. But Kaplan (1993 In: Fischer & Forrester 1993) reminds us about how these stories also need to make sense. He uses the analogy of the courtroom context to show how legal stories must have 'beginnings middles and ends', in addition to coherence and consistency, in order for them to make sense and to be believed. This would suggest the need for more alternative approaches to policy analysis which adopt a more social constructivist approach, based on the human agency that people have in order to reflect on their situation and the stories they tell themselves about cause and effect (Williams and May 1996).

This implies that whilst traditional policy analysis seeks to inform policy makers about an anticipated policy outcome, its impact and likelihood of achieving impact, interpretive approaches seek to identify the language, objects and acts (or symbolic artifacts) which determine how a policy is understood. In doing so interpretive approaches to policy analysis

attempt to reveal the 'architecture of meaning' by surfacing the metaphors, labels, narrative and rituals which are in existence within actors' daily practice. As such, with an interpretive approach, one can justifiably explore 'what does this policy mean' and 'to whom does it have meaning':

> "To understand the consequences of a policy for a range of people it will affect requires local knowledge – the very mundane expert understanding and practical reasoning about local conditions derived from lived experience (Yanow 2000, p5)

The 'making explicit' of otherwise 'implicit' language, practices and meaning used by practitioners to describe what they do has the capacity to dictate a prescribed course of action; as Yanow (2000) describes, 'language shapes perceptions and prescribes actions'. For instance, use of the language of 'decay', implies the need for 'treating or preserving'. It might also imply the need for a 'specialist' or 'doctor'. Similarly, in the analogy of 'broken homes', lies an assumption that something is broken and in need of physical repair:

> "Contending frames entail not just different policy discourses (language, understandings, perceptions) and different courses of action but also different values and meanings. (Yanow 2000, p12)

Hence the aim of interpretive approaches is to test commonly held claims and assumptions by asking 'whether people have come to believe a fact'. For instance, Hajer (1993) talks about the various discourses or understandings inherent within the acid rain debate, describing them as 'story-lines' based on different interpretations of the problem. In his study, he attempts to show how different interpretations of the causes and effects of acid rain can be built around different 'discourse coalitions' in terms of 'what is' (scientific

discourse); 'how it can be fixed' (engineering discourse); 'what the cost is to society' (economic discourse) and finally 'whether or not it should be tackled' (political discourse).

Hajer's (1993) suggestion is confirmed in a study by Linder (1995) who's investigation into the role of electromagnetic frequencies (EMF) in the causation of cancer, showed the presence of five so called 'communities of meaning' who each framed the debate differently depending upon their professional backgrounds, technical expertise and political interests. For instance, critics of the power industry referred to the EMF problem as a 'Public Health emergency' while those within the power industry reserved their judgment that 'there was inconclusive scientific research' to raise public concern.   In the context of deciphering the 'real' goals of regeneration then (as opposed to those stated in national policy documents) there is potential in identifying the different 'communities of meaning' which operate around distinct policy areas, as a means of surfacing not only how they understand the debate but also how some ways of seeing and doing might get 'air time' while others remain marginal and more peripheral.

Having explored the idea that from a rational policy analysis perspective, policy has less to do with whether policy goals are failing and more to do with the different ways in which policy goals are conceptualized and understood, the discussion now turns to consider regeneration policy goals from this alternative perspective. In keeping with an 'interpretive' policy analysis, an attempt is made to unpick some of the implicit assumptions underpinning policy goals and look for areas where ambiguity has seemingly arisen around policy outcomes. In the next section, two major areas of UK regeneration policy are examined including Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban Renaissance, with the aim of exploring the

degree to which any ambiguity which appears in policy outcomes might be the result of differences in interpretation. Given the burgeoning literature in this area, and the large number of academic disciplines across which research into regeneration policy failure falls (i.e. health sciences, public health, public policy and urban geography), a full and comprehensive review of the empirical evidence is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, an attempt is made to unpick some of the implicit assumptions underpinning UK regeneration policy (post 1997) in an attempt to show how the ambiguity which appears in UK regeneration policy outcomes may be due to multiple meanings around the nature and causes of deprivation.

The chapter concludes by suggesting that in view of the high degree of ambiguity surrounding the intentions of regeneration policy, there may be scope for adopting a more 'sense making' approach to the study of regeneration policy failure as a means of exploring where these differences in understanding might have served to negate the outcomes of policy. This more 'interpretive analysis' of regeneration policy goals forms the basis of a more focused discussion in chapter 3 which, draws on evidence from the wider political science literature to explore the way that policies might have been institutionally 'framed' over time and how this might have served to privilege the selection of some policy solutions in the past, over and above others.

ASSUMPTIONS OF REGENERATION POLICY

NEW LABOUR, REGENERATION POLICY, POVERTY & SOCIAL EXCLUSION

From the start of Labour's time in office in 1997, UK regeneration policy saw a plethora of Government policy initiatives seeking to tackle the problem of poverty and social exclusion (Alcock 2009). Early on, Labour laid down a commitment to 'addressing the legacy of

poverty and inequality left by the Conservative government' during the 1980's where one third of the UK population was in poverty' (Craig 2001). The Social Exclusion Unit formed the first of those commitments by offering a strategic overview in bringing together several Whitehall departments to oversee the implementation of regeneration policy. In the vast array of policy reviews which followed, a variety of Policy Action Teams (PATs) sought to produce evidence of the nature and scale of disadvantage in the UK. This was brought together in the document '*Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (SEU 1998) which exhorted the claim that:

> "Within 10 or 20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live.
> People on low incomes should not have to suffer conditions and services that are
> failing and so different from what the rest of the population receives" (SEU 1998, p8)

From this point onwards, it is fair to say that Neighbourhood Renewal policy acted as a 'blue-print' for a whole array of area-based regeneration (ABI) initiatives and delivery vehicles, based on tackling what it saw as issues surrounding worklessness and crime, poor health, skills, housing and the physical environment in the 44 most deprived neighbourhoods (ODPM 2005). Such a vision was articulated through a strong desire to 'narrow the gap' on national measures for these policy areas, based on comparison with national averages elsewhere in the UK (SEU 1998, p8). Subsequently, future policy sought to build on the original vision of Neighbourhood Renewal, through the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (ODPM 2003). Building on the work of the Urban Task Force (DETR 2000) originally established to investigate the causes of urban decline, and placing a particular emphasis on design excellence, social well being, and environmental

sustainability, this £38 billion programme set out a vision to 'deliver real change across communities...to deliver decent and affordable homes for all' (DCLG 2006, p1) stating that:

> "...people across the country, from all neighbourhood's have a fair share in the nation's prosperity. We want everyone to enjoy living in a sustainable community – places which offer work, a home and a secure and attractive quality of life" (ODPM 2003).

In addition to improving the housing provision for social rent and the homeless, the emphasis in the *Sustainable Communities* (ODPM 2003) policy was on tackling demand in relation to so called 'growth areas' and 'areas of low demand'. This resulted in an array of government-led initiatives to promote and improve the quality of the housing supply in areas of need through new development and demolition. Investment in so called 'Growth area's' took the form of affordable housing schemes whilst areas of 'low demand' were included in the 'housing market renewal pathfinder' scheme which sought to invest £1.2 million over five years in nine pathfinder areas across the North and Midlands. Later, changes to the regional infrastructure bound up in the Sub-National Review (CLG/ BERR 2008), placed a greater emphasis on regional development agencies in leading local economic development. Thus emerged, a duty on all local partners, to engage in the implementation of Regional Economic Strategies, in pursuit of new and innovative ways of increasing the economic growth of deprived areas through moves to achieve *Urban Renaissance* (Rogers 2005). Central to Labours' understanding of the policy solutions at this

time, was an acceptance that past policy had not worked and that more needed to be done to evidence what worked:

> "Government policies have not been good at tackling these issues, and sometimes they have been part of the problem. Departments have worked at cross purposes on problems that required a joined up response. Too much reliance was put on short term regeneration initiatives in a handful of areas and too little was done about the failure of mainstream public services in hundreds of neighbourhoods. There was too little attention to worklessness, crime and poor education and health services. Government failed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people or empower or develop their own solutions. There was a lack of leadership, and a failure to spread what works and encourage innovation". (SEU 1998, p7).

This increase in the Labour government's attention and investment to tackling the root causes of disadvantage, resulted in a flurry of activity both in central Government and beyond, with new academic research centre's springing up to accommodate the need for evaluation evidence in ascertaining 'what works' (Wilks-Hegg 1996, Diamond & Liddle 2005). Indeed, this endeavor has been the subject of any number of large scale and ongoing evaluations commissioned by government to ascertain 'what works' in regeneration (see for example DCLG 2010). However, despite this, there has long been ongoing confusion surrounding some of the mechanisms involved in regeneration, most notably based around; a lack of agreement about meaning of deprivation (Alcock 2009, Craig 2001, Hunter & Killoran 2004, Graham & Kelly 2004); a lack of understanding about

the root causes of poverty (Kleinman and Whitehead 1999, Atkinson & Kintrea 2001, Rogers 2005, Thomson et al 2006); and the lack of a suitable theory of change (Parry et al 2004). This means that instead of bringing greater clarity to the process of better understanding 'what works', knowledge has remained at the level of contested debate. For instance in one of the only systematic reviews of the impact of area based initiatives on health, Thomson (2006) has shown how evaluations since the 1980's have been limited by a lack of detail about programme delivery and where improvements in health outcomes have been made, they have been relatively small and somewhat mirrored by national trends elsewhere. As a result of this and other similar research in this area, there is evidence to suggest that contemporary regeneration policy is filled with ambiguity in terms of the outcomes produced. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to a consideration of some of the policy areas in which such policy ambiguity seemingly arises.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF DEPRIVATION

The overarching goal of the 'Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy' was articulated through a policy intention that 'within 10-20 years no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live' (SEU 1998). Such a policy was premised on the need to tackle a 'cycle of neighbourhood decline' as a result of poor outcomes for employment, housing, educational attainment, crime and health. It had at its heart, a desire for a fair share in the nations' prosperity, better opportunities and a better quality of life for all (ODPM 2005a, p2) and was premised on overcoming the 'legacy of poverty and inequality left by the Conservative government', where one third of the UK population was in poverty (Craig 2001). However, despite the laudable aspirations, what it actually means to be deprived remains highly

contested and steeped in conceptual confusion about the meaning of poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

For instance, whilst Alcock (2009) describes 'poverty' in relation to the lack of basic materials and resources one needs to live a healthy and productive life; the term 'social exclusion', originates from French notions of 'marginalisation', representing 'the way that people are prevented by structures and processes and mechanisms, from playing a full part in community life' (Craig 2001). As a result, Alcock (2009) has suggested that poverty constitutes a political problem:

> "Poverty has various manifestations, including a lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill-health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness, and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. (Copenhagen Declaration, United Nations, 1995, p57. Cited in: Alcock 2009, p4).

Such debate over meaning permeates the public health literature, not only in terms of defining what is meant but in determining the best means of redressing the inequalities which underpin poverty. For instance, the general idea that inequality exposes certain individuals to greater risk of death and disease can be expressed through the notion of 'health inequalities'. This is expressed in population terms by reported differences in mortality rates in comparison to the rest of the population where for instance, "in Glasgow, an unskilled, working class person will have a lifespan 28 years shorter than a business man in the top income bracket in Scotland" (Navarro 2009).

The causes which lie behind such social and economic disadvantage has been documented across a plethora of studies demonstrating the links between unemployment and ill-health (Bethuna 1996, Fox & shrewry 1988, Meltzer 1995 all cited in Baggott 2000); poor housing and emotional stress and injury (Gabe and Williams, Lowry 1991,Fisher and Collins 1993 all cited in Baggott 2000); income distribution and deprivation (Wilkinson 1992, 1996, 1997); class; ethnicity and higher morbidity from disease; and the links between gender and mortality (Baggott 2000). However the degree to which each risk factor actually contributes to positive health makes it difficult to ascertain where policy efforts should lie. For instance, in his seminal work around income inequality, Richard Wilkinson (1992, 1997) questioned whether inequalities would be better tackled through more re-distributive efforts to re-balance income levels than any material improvements (i.e. implied through the provision of better housing etc):

> "Is the health disadvantage of the least well off part of the population mainly a reflection of the direct physiological effects of lower absolute material standards (i.e. bad housing, poor diets, inadequate heating, and air pollution) or is it more a matter of the direct and indirect effects of differences in psychosocial circumstances associated with social position – of where you stand in relation to others?" (Wilkinson 1997).

Attempts to reduce and redress such health inequalities can be witnessed through attempts to focus policy on the 'wider determinants of health' (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2006). At an individual level, such determinants might refer to constitutional factors based around ones 'risk factors for disease', and the various 'lifestyle factors' pertaining to diet, level of physical

activity, smoking and drinking behaviour. At a community level, such determinants might involve access to social support through the quality of social networks. At a broader policy level, health is said to be determined through access to housing, employment and health-care services for example. This 'wider determinants' model, widely promulgated by Public Health is premised on the need to account for wider socio-political determinants of health based on 'the provision of certain systems which ensure a safe, well governed political and economic climate in which the economy can flourish and grow' (Wilkinson & Marmot 2003).

Graham and Kelly (2004) link these wider determinants to an individuals' socio-economic position, by showing how health might be determined differently through different levels of access to resources such as health care systems, education the labour market, and by exposing individuals to different risks (such as stress, hazards in the workplace, 'risk behaviours' such as poor diet, smoking or alcohol consumption). However, in doing so, they show how the 'conceptual confusion' which persist about the meaning of 'social inequality, social gradients and social exclusion' (p2) has meant that real opportunities to improve health and reduce the health differences through attention to such wider determinants, have often been missed. They believe this is fuelled by the fact that measures of 'social class', which have traditionally relied on recording the 'occupation of the male head of the household', have also tended to ignore other important dimensions of inequality such as gender, ethnicity, age and income (p2).

As part of important work by the Health Development Agency at the time, Hunter and Killoran (2004) looked into this conceptual confusion and considered its implications in regeneration practice. Drawing on a review of practitioner experience of implementing

policy to tackle health inequalities, they found significant differences in the definitions being used to describe health inequalities. Extending this, Graham and Kelly (2004) presented the idea of a social gradient in which risk factors for disease are determined by their socio-economic position or status, noting how efforts to tackle health inequality had tended to focus on the *unequal distribution of determinants* (as shown by differentials in life expectancy or morbidity) rather than on addressing differences in social relations. They witnessed this in policy attempts to reduce the associated risk factors (i.e. through efforts to 'narrow the gap' in standards of living by reducing smoking rates, increasing educational attainment). However, they also noted how in doing this, policy seemingly avoided addressing any real differences in social relations (or social gradient) as reflected in an individuals' social status or socioeconomic position but instead tended to focus on (the somewhat easier) lifestyle change. On the basis of such findings, they argued that policy efforts to tackle health inequalities at the time could be described as somewhat 'tokenistic' because ultimately they failed to address the underlying determinants of health.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT WORKS

The vision of Neighbourhood Renewal to build more 'effective structures', to achieve more 'joined up working' across government (Lee 1999) and to place 'communities at the heart of decision making' (ODPM 2005a) was built around the idea that 'since the challenges of deprivation varies from place to place, so we need locally determined solutions' (ODPM 2005a). In UK regeneration policy at this time, there was an emphasis on learning from past mistakes, rooted in assessment of the evidence of 'what works' and premised on the current Labour Government's recognition of the failure of past policy to tackle the root causes of deprivation (SEU 1998). This is reflected in the 'experimental' nature of some

regeneration programmes (Wilk-Heeg 1996). However, based on the application of a more interpretive lens to regeneration policy outcomes, it is possible to unpick hidden assumptions about 'what works' based on implicit beliefs about the root causes of poverty. Based on adopting an alternative approach to policy analysis then, it is possible to surface some of the implicit assumptions in Neighbourhood Renewal policy about the types of mechanisms which are perceived to work and where these might contribute to ambiguity in policy outcomes. These include inherent assumptions about joint working, assumptions about involving communities and assumptions about the role that place plays in determining solutions.

"MORE EFFECTIVE STRUCTURES THROUGH JOINT WORKING" (SEU 1998)

In seeking to build better structures through improved joint working, New Labours' modus operandi was ultimately built around the notion of partnerships. As local 'modes of governance' (Hughes 2006, p169) the need for partnerships was premised on guidance from the Policy Action Team 17's report *Joining it up locally* (DETR 2000), based on assumptions about the failure of past strategies to bring agencies together and complaints about the past interference of central government policies in local delivery processes (Hancock 2003, p130 In: Hughes 2006, p169). As a result, the post 1997 Labour administration introduced a whole raft of partnership based delivery vehicles, involving the private sector, voluntary sector and public sector. Most notable were Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), local governance bodies created with the purpose of bringing together agencies from a range of private, voluntary and public sector backgrounds as a means of instituting a 'community strategy for the renewal of the economic social, and environmental fabric of the locality' (Hughes 2006, p170).

However, conceptually, there continues to exist a well established debate about *what constitutes a partnerships* and what empirically, *what they should achieve* (Dickinson 2008). This has left some authors questioning whether what exists is more representative of a 'discourse of partnerships' rather than anything which exits in a physical form (Illiffe 2001). On the basis of such critique, Hughes (2009) notes how 'given their novelty...the success or failure of these formal arrangements cannot be easily accessed' (Hughes 2006, p170). For Diamond & Southern (2006) such ambiguity is associated with an ongoing lack of trust in regeneration professionals, based on New Labour's use of the term 'partnerships' as a means of 'appealing' to stakeholders about their value in achieving higher level third way goals:

> "Having sought to change the emphasis on partnerships during the post-1997 period, the Labour government have attempted to achieve greater levels of efficiency by encouraging partnerships to work across organizational boundaries. At the same time, third way philosophy has been used to persuade the private sector that social concerns requiring state intervention were not simply another name for welfarism, but were important points for business performance as well." (Diamond & Southern 2006).

Taking this further, Williams (in Diamond & Southern 2006 p3) notes how the context for success has been set out through a competitive ethos arguing that major cities seek to develop their outward looking stance, supported by the fostering of entrepreneurial cultures within the partnership approach, and how the strategic mobilisation around inter-regeneration competition culminates in the plethora of growth strategies we find today. However, while this may well lead to improvements in the physical environment, and

subsequently support cultural renaissance in some parts of the city, when such a collaborative action is targeted on a small spatial area within the city then this may well exacerbate inequity within the city overall.

"Placing communities at the heart of decision making" (SEU 1998)

The desire to place communities at the heart of regeneration (ODPM 2005a) was built around the idea that 'since the challenges of deprivation vary from place to place, so we need locally determined solutions' (ODPM 2005a). It was also rooted in guidance from Policy Action Team 17's report 'Joining it up locally' (DETR 2000) based on concern about the past failure of regeneration initiatives in the 1960's which failed to include or empower communities (Hancock 2003, p130 In: Hughes 2006, p169). However, as Parry et al (2004) have noted, the assumption by Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) that outcomes will be enhanced by community participation is based on historical evidence base which assumes participation to be an intuitively good thing (p501). In their study of a New Deal for Communities initiative, they note how despite beliefs in the ability of community participation to increase the consciousness of a communities' socioeconomic circumstances and promote better decision making, such claims are reliant on observations in the field and have not been validated empirically. This, they argue is played out in the numerous examples which portray the complexity surrounding the engagement of hard-to-reach groups; the tensions associated with the involvement of 'usual suspects' and the interminable problem of 'over-consulted' communities. The challenges that such problems pose to broader notions of democratic accountability are confirmed by Atkinson (1999) in the quote below about 'usual suspects':

"There is a strong possibility that community representatives will find themselves committed to a view of `best interests' not shared by significant sections of the community, opening up the very real possibility of a `gap' developing between the representative and the represented" (Atkinson 1999)

Subsequently, Parry et al (2004) go on to discuss how the intentions of New Deal for Community Initiatives (NDC) to "intuitively bring about health gain through their participatory approach to changing the physical and socioeconomic environment" (p497), is counter-intuitive based on evidence that in the 5 year evaluation of the NDC programme in the West Midlands, mechanisms involving the selection and recruitment and commissioning of area-based initiatives are 'socio-spatially' stigmatising because of the competition created between communities (Parry et al 2004).

"NO ONE SHOULD BE DISADVANTAGED BY WHERE THEY LIVE" (SEU 1998)
The need to better understand the link between poverty and place has formed the basis of much research in the public health and urban geography literature. However, ongoing confusion about the links between deprivation and employment, housing and health has left this intention somewhat wanting (Kleinman and Whitehead 1999, Atkinson & Kintrea 2001, Thomson et al 2008, Allen 1998). In terms of employment, following the comprehensive spending review in 2007, the so called 'Worklessness agenda' was re-articulated through the *Working Neighbourhood's Fund (WNF)* (DCLG/ DWP 2007) which sought to combine the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) with the Deprived Area Fund (DAF) (DCLG/ DWP 2007, p3). The WNF also brought previous economic development initiatives such as the Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) to a close which had originally sought to 'raise levels of enterprise and employment, by fostering entrepreneurial and work-oriented aspirations'.

Based on a 10 year programme, these LEGI programmes were delivered through a process of centrally agreed, but locally determined target outcomes based around achieving outcomes such as increasing local enterprise, employment or self employment (Lawlor & Nichols 2006, p3).

However, despite the assumption that 'public investment leads directly to positive change' an interim evaluation of the St Helen's LEGI, entitled *Hitting the target, missing the point* (Lawlor & Nichols 2006) not only showed that the LEGI programme had been shelved half way through, but that there were major concerns about the extent to which any change could be attributed to the programme. There was also, they claimed, an unrealistic expectation that local people 'previously excluded from the labour market' would enter full time work (p4). Concern was also expressed about the 'length of the journey into employment' and the capacity to record potential 'stepping stones into employment' in the context of local people who may require 'intensive support and counselling' in order for them to return to meaningful employment (p4). With regard to assumptions about the causes of worklessness, the focus on place in the WNF represented little change from a long-held perception that worklessness was the result of where you lived:

> "Many of the most disadvantaged people in the labour market also live in the most disadvantaged places, disproportionately including ethnic minorities – we need to tailor our approach to local communities" (DCLG/ DWP 2007, p3).

These assumptions about the links between employment and place have formed the basis of much research in public health to explore what works in employment-led regeneration. Although relatively small in size, a study by Atkinson and Kintrea (2001) offers the rare

opportunity to compare two areas in relatively similar social situations. The study was designed to look at the impact of area effects on life chances in two pairs of deprived and socially mixed neighbourhoods in Glasgow & Edinburgh, Scotland by asking 'what is the net change in contribution made to life chances made by living in one area rather than another' (p2278). In the study they describe how this issue of spatial segregation between the poor and the better off might impact on life chances through stigma, employment opportunities, and life expectancy, and seeks to question whether the experience of poverty is compounded by access to poor public and private services (i.e. transport, shops, leisure) and social networks or whether poverty is due to wider macro-economic, structural factors which impact on income and employment. Using survey method and drawing on a random sample of some 200 addresses, the study examines the impact of various types of area effects including concentration of services, overcrowding, location of resources such as employment, housing, and the social milieu in terms of access to social networks. With an unusually high response rate of 53%, results showed that both deprived areas were equally characteristic of high levels of social need (as characterised by Local Authority housing; lack of access to a car; high levels of illness and disability; single parents; a lack of qualifications; the likelihood that the head of household would be unemployed, and social networks which relied on word of mouth for jobs). However, the main problems that arose were seemingly as a result of the *stigma associated with living in deprived areas*, rather than any other effects. In conclusion, Atkinson & Kintrea (2001) suggest that it is the failure to see the *source of poverty outside of a neighbourhood context*, which actually limits the impact of policy in combating poverty. The implications of such research highlight the power of assumptions in determining the effectiveness of policy to tackle worklessness in the local

population on the basis that if employers assume that the workforce in an area is 'not up to the job' then they may well seek to recruit elsewhere (Kleinman & Whitehead 1999 p82). Further, if residents are segregated from employment opportunities by their socio-economic position then this also impacts on their knowledge of networks of support to find employment locally. It suggests the need to measure success by the extent to which individuals are enabled to improve their circumstances *irrespective of where they live*.

In other important research, Kleinman and Whitehead (1999) have also sought to show how spatial assumptions about the 'relationship between deprivation and housing conditions' have ultimately led to concentrations of poverty in a particular place (p80). Drawing on the historical analysis of post second world war housing policy, they note how the mass replacement of slum dwellings in the 1950's with 'low density, high-rise estates' on the edge of urban areas in the 1960's (followed some ten years later by their subsequent repair and renewal) has actually contributed to the housing problem rather than resolving it, by concentrating poorer households into particular 'spatial' areas which in themselves appear to be deprived:

> "These policies together with the fact that the dwellings built at the height of the social housing boom are anyway in need of large scale improvements are seen as a major source for current difficulties – identified as inadequate housing in the centre of cities, as well as poor housing, inadequate employment and limited opportunities for those on the large local authority estates" (p78).

That housing is seen as the root cause of deprivation rather than the people living there has a fundamental effect on the way that policy is designed, specifically pertaining to the way that policy:-

- Targets those living in social housing on local authority estates (rather than those living in private rented or owner occupied properties);

- Assumes these 'deprived areas' suffer from poor local economic performance, when in fact this is more likely due to the people living there being in the 'weakest competitive position';

- Success is measured in terms of the level of transition both into and out of an area.

This has implications for the attitudes of local employers to the local resident population in terms of their 'employability' and can lead to drastic measures where 'bring their own workforce with them' on the basis that the local resident population might not be 'up to the job'. Furthermore, if residents are segregated from economic opportunity by their position (i.e. because they are surrounded by lots of in-movers who are unemployed) then this is likely to limit knowledge and networks of support to find out about opportunities locally. This also affects the measures of success on the basis that people who get jobs tend to move away from deprived areas, soon to be replaced by in-movers who are more likely to be unemployed. This sets up a constant churn of 'in-movers and out-movers', in which a deprived area is continually made to look deprived (Kleinman & Whitehead 1999, p81).

"PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES SHOULD NOT HAVE TO SUFFER CONDITIONS AND SERVICES THAT ARE FAILING AND SO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE REST OF THE POPULATION RECEIVES"

Latterly, in *Urban Renaissance*, Rogers (2005) shows how assumptions about the causes of urban decline, have seen cities as the 'engines of economic growth' (p1). The vision, made by the Urban Task Force set up at the height of Labours succession into government to review the causes of urban decline, was one of 'well-designed, compact and connected cities supporting a diverse range of uses where people live, work, and enjoy leisure time at close quarters in a sustainable urban environment, well integrated with public transport and adaptable to change (p1). The importance of focusing on 'the city' as a place for policy intervention is reflected in government policy narratives which have described the importance of 'city regions', thereby representing both their relational and territorial role in engaging with the regional economic infrastructure through efforts to promote the public realm:

> "Cities drive prosperity and provide access to services. They bring diverse people together and offer shared spaces and experiences and amenities such as parks, libraries, schools and transport. These assets offer opportunities to people on low incomes and drive the growth of cities and magnets" (Rogers 2005, p3)

Success, by the Urban Task Force was seen in terms of people moving back into cities which are seen as drivers to economic prosperity; better environmental moves, through the increasing use of brown-field sites; and through a greater focus on 'quality design' reflecting the environmental concerns of the sustainability lobby. There was a social focus too on promoting connectivity to local suburbs, shops and services. This arose from the assumption that by promoting a vibrant 'public realm', both business and wealth would be

attracted into the city, which would in turn stimulate economic growth for the surrounding area.

"As cities compete with one another to host increasingly foot loose international companies, their credentials as attractive vibrant homes are major selling points" (Rogers 2005, p5)

However in a report of progress some seven years on and despite positive reports of progress in some areas (most notably capacity building to bridge the gap between professional cultures and skills and improvements to some local infrastructure) Rogers (2005) reports his disappointment that huge problems remain, not least in terms of the loss of middle class families from cities; increasing inequalities in access to affordable housing and low levels of social housing. Instead of making quality, design excellence and connectivity an integral part of the planning process in new developments, Rogers (2005) suggested there was a *over focus on quantity over quality'* with developments poorly linked into local infrastructure including transport and public services (p5). Whilst there were some examples of 'best practice' in urban of design, these were represented on a piecemeal basis. This, Lord Rogers' suggested was due to a 'lack of strategic decision making' compounded by an array of delivery vehicles, including both the Regional Development Agency, Urban Regeneration Companies and English Partnerships which in terms of governance 'lacked a single purpose or executive powers to enforce change' (p17). In the face of piecemeal decision making and a lack of evaluation of impact, Rogers asked some probing questions about the real intentions of urban renaissance:

"to what extent is this piecemeal approach an example of symbolic policy, where governments demonstrate their commitment to sustainability through good design via a few 'token projects' in parts of the country, whilst the vast majority of developments function as ' mono-functional enclaves, based on the lowest common denominator design' (p6).

'NARROW THE GAP' ON NATIONAL MEASURES FOR THESE POLICY AREAS, BASED ON COMPARISON WITH NATIONAL AVERAGES ELSEWHERE IN THE UK' (SEU 1998, P8).

In Neighbourhood Renewal, progress measured in the form of floor targets was to be represented by a series of minimum standards for disadvantaged groups for key areas such as housing, education and health policy, striving for improvements in the quality of social housing (PSA7); educational attainment (PSA 6 and 7); employment rates (PSA 4) and a reduction in levels crime (PSA 1) and health inequalities (PSA 2). Such targets could then be measured against a performance at a national level through, for example increases in life expectancy or economic performance and enterprise targets. Consequently, much of the data on the performance of Neighbourhood Renewal is represented in terms of rates in comparison with the national average. Typically, such impact has typically been measured across a comprehensive range of national evaluations funded by Government as a means of determining 'what works in Neighbourhood Renewal' (See CLG 2010). However, despite the intentions of Neighbourhood Renewal to tackle a 'cycle of neighbourhood decline' as a result of poor outcomes for employment, housing, educational attainment, crime and health, studies of the impact of regeneration have show a distinct lack of evidence of outcomes (Diamond and Southern 2006 p1). For instance, the New Deal for Communities National Evaluation (CLG 2010) was performed longitudinally over a ten year period by a

team of researchers from the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. On the basis of measuring progress across the main policy areas in terms of health, housing, worklessness, education and crime, the evaluation sought to examine the 'interventions and impacts of partnerships locally'. However, findings from Phase 1 showed that in the period 2000/1 to 2003/4, despite allocating over a quarter of the annual spend (i.e. £107 million) to 'improving the environment, the appearance of NDC areas and housing quality/ satisfaction' just 14% of residents reporting an improvement to their local area; 9% reporting that car crime was no longer a problem; and there was little change in resident reports of satisfaction with their accommodation or repairs. In health, in the same period, despite a £48 million investment in 'health promotion, reducing death rates, and addressing mental health' (p21), only marginal changes were reported in rates of smoking, self reported health, morbidity (ill-health) rates and mortality (death) rates. Perhaps more worryingly, as the authors noted, this was also in the broader context that "the rate of illness and disability in NDC areas is still almost twice what would be expected" (p21).

In health, the inherent assumption that health outcomes should ultimately improve as a result of regeneration is borne out in international policy commitments to improve health for all which notes the importance of socio-environmental factors in determining positive health (WHO 1999). Consequently governments' have made significant investment in area-based initiatives which incorporate a range of health improvement interventions ranging from health promotion to community development activity to efforts to tackle health inequalities (Hills 2004).   But Thomson et al (2006) suggest that the impact of such interventions to improve health should not be assumed.

"The potential for positive health effects is often used as a rationale for public investment in neighbourhood regeneration. However positive health effects should not be assumed to be the inevitable result of health improvement" (Thomson et al 2006)

Noting the significant investment made by Regeneration policies over a 20 year period, Thomson (2006) conducted one of the only systematic reviews, to explore the extent to which regeneration policies positively impact on health. Looking specifically for studies which reported impacts on health (of any form) that is Quality of Life (QOL), well-being, health, morbidity, and mortality, or any proxy measures of health as defined by 'user-satisfaction surveys' and wider socioeconomic outcomes pertaining to housing improvement, education, employment, training and income. Thomson (2006) shows a distinct lack of evaluation studies; that is out of some 896 studies reviewed only 86 were deemed to be relevant, with a large number of studies having to be excluded because of a focus on process and not outcome; value for money, or a failure to assess health (Thomson 2006). Instead, only small reported changes in health were observed, and these were also reflected by those seen at a national level. For instance, despite improvements in employment rates in three studies (as measured by an increase in the percentage of working age in employment by 4%, 6% and 9% respectively), two out of four case study areas also reported a fall in employment, with one study showing no change from the national average.

Disappointing findings about the ability of regeneration to impact on different outcomes in terms of health, employment and education have surfaced elsewhere. In an evaluation of

the impact of Local Economic Growth Initiatives (LEGI) to reduce the gap in enterprise and employment between deprived areas and more prosperous areas, questions were raised about the failure of schemes to ask the right questions in terms of 'who gets the jobs' and 'whether they would have got them anyway'. They also note the failure of schemes to record the impact in terms of outcomes for health, crime or quality of life. Indeed, as a result, NEF issues the warning that 'what gets measured focuses priorities and influences behaviour and guides investment' (p8):

> "Public intervention in economic activity requires evidence of market failure, so interventions are designed to address the causes of market failure. If for example, inequality is a result of economic activity and not a failure of markets then different objectives or a different theory of change may be required." (Lawlor & Nichols 2006, p9).

In housing, the difficulties of measuring such change is highlighted by Allen (1998) who posits that despite over 100 years of evidence the reasons for the continued failure to study the impact of housing on health are linked to difficulties in attributing the links between poor housing and health:

> "There seems then a reluctance to probe beyond a general assumption that
> health will improve as housing is improved. Studies of public housing renewal schemes have, however, rarely operated at a micro-process level, that of the individual experience, which would allow this assumption to be tested. In part this may arise from the difficulty of the task as significant changes in health are likely to occur only over a relatively long period" (Allen 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of questions about the intentions of regeneration, Chapter 2 set out to explore some of the taken for granted assumptions of UK regeneration policy. It took as its starting point, the historical shift away from techno-rational policy analysis because of its failure to take account of the essentially human values associated with policy goals such as efficiency, liberty etc (Stone 2001). The implications of this suggest that instead of asking 'how have decisions been made?' rather we should be asking 'what values are driving this process' and 'what assumptions are being made?' (Hajer & Wagenar 2003). On the basis of this analysis, the chapter then moved to consider some of the taken for granted assumptions of regeneration policy and concluded that there is much evidence to suggest that the intentions of regeneration policy are ambiguous because of contested meanings about what it means to be deprived and a lack of evidence about what works in regeneration to tackle deprivation. In the face of such ambiguity, this suggests that what might be required is a more social constructivist/interpretive approach in making sense of ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes. However, according to Hill and Hupe (2009) such debates about the way policy is made, brings into focus broader questions about the role of the state in governing decision making about policy (Hill and Hupe 2009, p14). Defining governance as 'the way in which collective impacts are produced in a social system' (p13), they highlight the importance of policy analysis in the context of wider issues of governance. This calls for a more critical analysis of the policy making process with an eye to the social and political context in which decisions are made. With this in mind, Chapter 3 moves to consider the intentions of policy in the context of these broader theories of

governance and the role they might play in shaping and constraining the way that policy problems are framed.

CHAPTER 3

THEORIES OF FRAMING, HIGHER LEVEL NARRATIVES AND SHIFTING PATTERNS OF GOVERNANCE

"The term "regeneration" is an ambiguous one. In the UK the history of regeneration is varied with responsibility vacillating between departments of government and positioned in the consciousness of the general public mainly through localized prestigious physical building such as waterfront transformation. Yet the regeneration often written about by academics and practitioners considers the wide expanse of change in the social and economic environment". (Diamond and Southern 2006 – Guest Editorial)

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, conclusions were drawn about the limited capacity of traditional policy analysis to explain the ongoing ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes based on its tendency to overly rationalise the nature of policy goals (Stone 2001, Yanow 1996, 2000). Drawing on the work of these more constructivist traditions, the suggestion was made that such ambiguity might be better explained by seeking to understand the implicit assumptions which underpin policy goals and how these might differ from the official goals stated in policy documents (Yanow 1995, Hofman 1995, Colebatch 1995, Hack 1998). In Chapter 3, an attempt is made to extend this important area of 'interpretivist' work by seeking to understand how regeneration policy goals might have be construed by drawing on debates in political science about the role of the state and its institutions, and the role they play in framing policy problems.

Drawing on theories of bureaucracy, institutionalism, and new institutionalism, several commentators have noted the general shift away from the bureaucracy associated with Traditional Public Administration towards more managerialist forms associated with new public management approaches (See Hood 1991) and more latterly towards a broader

'network governance type' approach has called for a wider range of actors to be involved in the decision making process (see Newman 2001, p26, Bovaird and Loeffler 2003). Based on this more contextual understanding of how policy is made, it is possible to analyse the extent to which political ideologies such as Keynesianism or neo-liberalism might have framed the way that regeneration policy goals have been conceived over time (Atkinson 2000, Wilks-Heeg 1996). What this suggests is that in contrast to the more rational approaches to policy analysis, instead of asking how policy decisions have been made and by whom, it might be more helpful to explore the ideological context in which policy goals have been constructed, in terms of what issues are given air time; which voices have been ruled in and out of the process of decision making; and what myths (or assumptions) might have been perpetuated as a result.

Given the broader aims of this thesis, there is value here, in exploring whether the reason for persistent ambiguity in policy outcomes is due to the symbolic role it plays in supporting the moral claims actors make about particular policies (Hajer & Wagenaar 2003) or due to other factors associated with the political context. Here, by drawing on more contemporary debates in critical geography, it is possible to surface major critique about the structural nature of so called 'dominant ideologies' such as Keynesianism or Neo-liberalism (Howarth 2000, Howarth & Torfing 2005). Such critique is based on an apparent further shift towards more post-modern forms of governance involving less 'fixed' understandings of governance based on more blurred, decentralized and pluralist connections (Richards and Smith 2003). Taking into account these broader ontological debates about the more discursive (rather than literal) nature of policy suggests the need for a more critical approach to analysing the nature of policy goals which accounts for some of the limitations of constructivist notions of

framing. With this in mind, Chapter 3 now turns to considerations about the extent to which framing offers a suitable explanation of the ongoing ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes in the context of shifting patterns of governance. Chapter 4 then turns to considerations of ontology, in debating ontological nature and role of context in policy.

THEORIES OF GOVERNANCE

Ideas about how policy decisions are made are bound up in historical and political ideas about the role and nature of the state and its institutions (Hill and Hupe 2009, p14). This represents a shift in the way that policy tends to be analysed which is summed up well by Coveney (2010):

> "Traditionally, policy analysis has been defined as determining what governments' do, why they do it, and what difference it makes (Dye, 1976). More recently, such analysis has become concerned with examining the processes of governance and policy advocacy, rather than with purely focusing on government itself" (Coveney 2010, p515).

Hood (1991) reputedly documented the shift away from a bureaucratic style of government with its rational-legal desire to implement rules and procedures through a formal office or bureau towards new public management (NPM) approaches (Ham & Hill 1991). Such functionalist views of the state and how it is organised are premised on traditional Weberian modes of governance, and institutional theories of governance which have each sought to study the physical arena in which policy making takes place. According to Hill (2005), this includes 'the political organisations, laws and rules that are central to every political system and they constrain how decision makers behave' (Hill 2005, p38). They are

also 'part of the mysterious black box, otherwise known as the state that turns politics into policy' (p39). However, in keeping with rationalist critiques of policy making, traditional theories of public administration have also fallen foul to critiques about the extent to which decision making really flows from such rational processes. The demise of such views can be traced to critiques about the increasing role of interest groups (Hill 2005, p49); the failure to account for the wider socio-political context (p52) and a failure to account for change according to behavioural action (p53). According to Perri 6 et al (2003), Hughes (2002) and Newman (2001), such critiques have typically centred on a dramatic shift in ideology away from traditional hierarchical forms of government towards a more decentralised model of administration with a flattening of the traditional hierarchies and a greater drive for greater productivity and customer focused activity. As a result, some have suggested that a new system of governance emerged involving the state through 'steering rather than rowing' (Osborne & Gaebler 1992). Bovaird & Loeffler (2003) subsequently documented the changes brought about through the emergence of this new 'civil society' which, they suggested has resulted in an increase in the range of partners in the delivery of public services and involving policy in a more complex negotiation of values through discourse (Hill 2002, Bovaird & Loeffler 2003, Newman 2001) (see table 1).

However, what is bound up in this paradigmatic shift, are notions of power in state institutions and how it is distributed. Such discussions ultimately centre on whether power is distributed in the hands of a few or many and which actors, if at all, manage to secure a place at the decision making table (see table 2).

	Legislation driven	Service driven	Citizen driven

Goal	Legal conformity	Competitiveness	Community/ quality of life
Perspective	State	Public sector	Civil society
Type of control	Hierarchy	Market	Networks
Logic	Legal	Economic	Political

TABLE 1: FROM BOVAIRD AND LOEFFLER 2003 P19

For instance, in acknowledging a general shift away from a representative democracy towards a more participative one, Hill (2005) notes the developing need for government to seek approval from the public for decisions made, in order to 'stay in office' (p27). This increasing consultation of the public as consumers of services (i.e. as parents, tenants, patients etc) has led to a situation whereby policy decisions are, allegedly, now made in negotiation *between* government and the public, rather than by them alone.

Power/ Democratic	Concentrated	Distributed
Equal	Representative democracy (i.e. UK)	Pluralist government (i.e. Scandinavia)
Unequal	Un-representative democracy (i.e. elitist, dictatorship)	Chaotic governance (i.e. African nation states)

TABLE 2: FROM HILL (2005, P27)

By linking the emergence of governance debates to theories of policy making, Hill and Hupe (2009) usefully note the impact that such paradigmatic shifts have had on perpetuating increasingly ambitious forms of policy intervention such as to tackle poverty (p106). They note how this has subsequently shifted the understanding of implementation away from

problem solving towards a concern for contracting following New Public Management (p107). It has also, they suggest, changed the way that policy problems are conceived in terms of hierarchy, markets and networks. This, they suggest, has resulted in a decline in interest in the study of implementation and its failures, towards more pluralist forms of policy analysis which take into account the many and varied ways that policy goals are interpreted. According to Hill & Hupe (2009) this usefully highlights the role of interpretive approaches, in exploring how actors make sense of the policy debate.

THEORIES OF FRAMING AND HIGHER LEVEL NARRATIVES

An ideological shift is said to have taken place towards more deliberative forms of governance. This brings into focus theories of framing and the notion of 'multiple social realities' which a wider range of actors might bring to the policy table. According to Atkinson (2000) any attempt to understand the nature of such framing must also account for the much broader question of the epistemological nature of knowledge in policy and how 'problems' might be constructed (Atkinson 2000a, p212). In sociology, this long standing and well-known debate contrasts the empirical status of knowledge (in this case, the nature of policy problems as 'facts') with the idealist notion that policy knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by individual experience. In the case of policy analysis, what this implies is that problems cannot be resolved through the rational search for evidence but rather by acknowledging the way that it has been framed depending upon ones epistemological stance. In keeping with this idea, Rein & Schon (1993) describe framing in terms of the way that actors draw on prior knowledge in order to make sense of complex situations. Accordingly, such framing describes how 'participants construct the problems of their problematic policy situations through frames in which facts, values,

theories and interests are integrated' (p145). Because of this, Rein and Schon (1993) suggest that not only do actors disagree about the best solution, but they also disagree on the nature of the problem too.

Hajer (1993) shows how these different frames are represented in the form of narratives or stories which actors socially construct in order to express their interpretation of the problem (p44). In doing so, Hajer (1993) suggests that these narratives represent the different causes and effects of a problem, which, when actors share a construct, merge to form 'discourse coalitions'. Hajer (1993) uses the example of acid rain to explain this process, by showing how the presence of large groups of unexplained dead trees might be constructed differently depending upon the way that actors make sense of how the trees came to die; that is whether this was due to natural causes or not i.e. through changes in the weather or through man-made factors such as pollution. For Hajer (1993), it is the way that actors socially construct such policy problems, which determines whether or not it becomes a political problem. Hence, in telling a story about the possibility of acid rain, he suggests that a narrative is formed about the way in which the dead trees become labeled as 'victims of pollution', thereby also making it a political concern (p44).

However, in keeping with Atkinson's (2000) warning to be conscious of the epistemological basis of knowledge, Hajer (1993) also points out that these social constructs do not arise out of no-where, but rather they are influenced by the political and ideological context at the time, which, he suggests, actors actively deliberate, as they try to 'impose their view of social reality on others'. This deliberative element has been discussed in the broader policy sciences, in an attempt to explore the way that power is exercised in policy decision making

(Hajer & Wagenaar 2003). According to Hajer (1993), this is best explained through the notion of higher level discourse and the way that different ideologies are given form in different political contexts, based on their perceived historical utility in solving policy problems:

> "Social constructs do not arise in a historical vacuum. They emerge in the context of historical discourses which contain knowledge of how similar phenomena were dealt with in the past" (Hajer 1993, p45)

According to Hajer (1993) given the nature of such higher level discourse as an 'ensemble of ideas, concepts', they come to represent an array of different ways of seeing and doing, some of which may be based on myth's or mere assumptions about what has worked in the past. Hajer (1993) describes this as occurring through a process of 'discourse structuration' in which he suggests one particular discourse emerges as the dominant way of seeing. The inherent danger here however, is the way this defines all social practices, based on this dominant form of reasoning. Atkinson (2000a, p213) describes these 'institutionalized ways of thinking' in terms of 'master' or higher level narratives, and suggests that although they are not immediately visible they nonetheless have the capacity to act as a lens through which all problems are filtered:

> "Narratives attempt to project a particular version of reality, seeking to organize it in a certain manner while simultaneously attempting to mask or deny contradictions within that reality and limit our perception of such contradictions – a form of closure or what is termed a strategy of containment" (Atkinson 2000a, p213).

On the basis of such discussion, it follows that through exploring the notion of higher level narratives we can begin to see how they might act as framing devices by determining not just which political issues are given air time, but also which issues get closed down and ignored as a result. In the context of the broader aims of this thesis to explore the reasons for persistent policy failure, what this implies is that through the process of ideological or political framing, some policy solutions to tackling deprivation have become more favoured at some times than others, and that this can be linked to the higher level goals being purported by the dominant political ideology at the time. This in turn suggests that there is much value in examining the ideological context in which regeneration policy goals have been constructed as a means of understanding how some ideas may have been ruled in and ruled out.

This idea about the 'ruling in' and 'out' of different actors in the policy process is usefully demonstrated by Fischer (1993) who shows how in the course of liberalist tendency of 1960s US policy socialist/ welfare state thinking (through the 'war on poverty') the public view was actually left out of the debate. In his analysis, he notes how the conservatives' initial distaste for socialist policy think tanks favoured the involvement of 'policy elites', whose expertise was sought from social scientists in backing up policy decisions. However, he notes how this interest subsequently shifted in the 1970s towards seeking the opinions of 'right-wing' business leaders and academics in formulating policy. As a result, Fischer (1993) suggests in the course of this shift towards the use of policy elites on both sides of the political debate, policy issues or 'problems' were already part-constructed by the time they came to the decision making table.

Drawing more broadly on political science, the way that such 'ruling in and out' of the voices of different actors takes place, can be partly explained by theories of 'new-institutionalism' in the way that actors are tied to the respective norms and rules of the institutions in which they operate. According to Newman (2001), such 'new institutionalist' thinking refers to the 'formal and informal rules, norms and conventions through which social action is shaped' (p26). For Skocpol (1997) this means that states can play an important role in 'diagnosing societal problems' and 'framing' policy responses to them. But John (2003) shows how this can, in turn, place constraints on the type of policy that is formed (John 2003). For instance, March and Olsen (1986) explain how different constitutions or laws might make some policies more palatable but they can also exclude certain decisions from being made by way of exclusionary laws. In the context of regeneration policy, Atkinson (2000) suggests how this might work by institutions becoming tied to a particular set of rules which then frame the nature of the policy that is produced. He goes on to explain how, in adopting such an approach, ideas are assisted in being 'kept on or off the agenda' by the way that they are 'internalised' by different actors, organisationally and how this sets boundaries within which the dominant discourse can function (p217):

> "...in relation to policy, particular narratives structure and limit what may be told or said and how reality is thought represented and acted upon...narratives are not free floating but linked to political formations and institutional organisational forms" (p213). "Political actors deliberately portray them [problems] in ways calculated to gain support" (Atkinson 2000a, p214)

On this basis, it is possible to see how regeneration policy issues may have become framed over time by the ideas perpetuated by differing ideological and political contexts (Wilks-Heeg 1996). For instance, in his analysis of the etymological roots of regeneration policy, Furbey (1999) connects regeneration to nineteenth century classical liberalist notions of intervention through beliefs about "individualism (that is self interest and choice), [and] its role in producing an enterprise culture which succeeds over and above a morally unfit poor" (p424). Later, in tracing the early 20th century influence of 'new liberal' ideas, Furbey (1999) shows how ideas about social welfare became prominent, noting how the shift from classical liberalist thinking towards 'new liberalist ways', was driven by competition between individuals to a competition between nation states. This, he argues, was marked by a move towards regional competitiveness and 'language of modernisation'. It was also driven by an inherently Social Darwinist belief, based on the 'survival of the fittest' in which failure to tackle the poor and their urban slums would result in the 'reproducing of negative characteristics' (p426). In a much later shift towards 'new-right' policies, Furbey (1999) proceeds to show how in advocating a neo-liberalist agenda, regeneration policy became linked to somewhat 'neo-conservative' moralistic tones linked to the pursuit of family values, stability and tradition. Here the focus on the individual was balanced with a need for personal responsibility in 'underwriting the morality of the market'.

In the context of claims about the symbolic nature of policy, what this suggests is that it may not be enough to unpick the underlying assumptions of policy actors, but that it is important to marry this with a critical perspective about the political context which may have shaped whose voice is ruled in and who's voice is ruled out. Atkinson (2000) summarises this debate by reminding us of the inherent dangers of unquestioningly accepting the objective

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claims of policy and the need to assume a more critical stance in terms of analysing the real objectives of policy (Atkinson 2000a, p229):

> "What [this] suggests is that we need to examine (urban) policy in a critical and historical sense and not simply accept governments assertion that it has a policy. Nor should we accept that governments own assertion about the objectives of 'policy'; these need to be critically interrogated" (Atkinson 2000a, p213).

With this in mind the discussion now turns to an historical analysis of regeneration policy in order to examine how policy problems might have been framed over time. As with Chapter 2, the aim here is not to provide a definitive account of the historical context of regeneration policy but rather as a means of highlighting the wide range of ways in which the urban problem has been constructed over time, by situating them in their social and political contexts.   In keeping with the aims of this thesis to examine the possible reasons for ambiguity in regeneration policy, a discussion then follows about to the extent to which past political ideologies might have shaped and constrained the way that urban policy problems have been constructed. Based on the suggestion by Richards and Smith (2003) the chapter concludes by suggesting that in the context of further shifts towards more post-modern forms of governance, there is a need to examine UK regeneration policy goals from within a more discursive context to account for the increasing complexity in which policy is emerging. This is then followed in Chapter 4 by a more in-depth analysis of the ontological basis of discourse.

THE FRAMING OF REGENERATION POLICY
1945 – MID 1960'S POST WAR PLANNING DISCOURSE

In their classic text, *Urban Policy in Britain: The City, the state and the Market* Atkinson & Moon (1994) provide one of the most comprehensive synopses of the history of the framing of the urban policy since the second world war. They suggest that the early post war period was highly characteristic of a 'physical approach' to regeneration through efforts to restore the economy and the physical fabric of cities after the devastation caused by the war. Following the war, they note how some 200,000 houses had been destroyed and 500,000 houses left uninhabitable (p22). They also describe how assumptions about the need for more housing became framed by a post war 'planning discourse' which would see new housing stock brought to bear through demolition, the municipal development of housing and cities and the re-balancing of cities following an overconcentration of population as a result of 19th century industrialisation. However, at the same time, they also note how these very problems of poor housing stock and a shortage of housing were also issues which pre-dated the Second World War. This was evidenced through the so called 'slum clearance policy' in the 1930's and was based on the assumption that poverty was the result of poor 'insanitary' housing, which must be removed (p23). Hence, despite the apparent instigation of a huge programme of demolition and a large scale municipal housing programme over the next 25 years, what was actually being implied was a return to the slum clearance of the pre-war years. However, the failure to assess the full cost of demolition rendered the programme financially unviable. Subsequently, in implying that poverty had a physical cause (i.e. housing) meant that any social or economic causes were subsequently excluded from the debate. Other approaches to regeneration at this time, framed under the 'physical' banner were instigated through the Town & Country Planning Act 1947 and the New Towns Act 1946 and involved attempts to re-balance the impact of uneven

development of nineteenth century industrialization on urban housing and industry (p25). But again, attempts to protect the countryside from urban sprawl instigated through the so called 'green belt' instead acted to enclose the city keeping property values high and excluding the less affluent, something to which later policy would subsequently return to.

MID 1960'S - 1977 SOCIAL PATHOLOGY DISCOURSE

The limitations of so called 'physical approaches' to regeneration in the post war years led to a resurgence of the urban problem in the mid 1960's, leading some to believe that individual behaviours and cultures might be the cause of enduring poverty (Atkinson & Moon 1994). Overcrowding after the war was still seen as a problem, however the overriding perception that poverty arose out of individual failure to take advantage of the new opportunities on offer, gave way to a framing of the urban problem in terms of 'social pathology' (Atkinson 2000a). Hence, in response to Townsend's 1967 critique about a 'persistence of poverty', individual behaviour was seen as a cause of poverty which could be seen to be concentrated in particular geographical areas, or 'pockets of poverty'. Atkinson and Moon (1994) show how such assumptions about the spatial causes of poverty encouraged an area-based approach by targeting those apparently most in need with resources (p34). They also suggest that the use of the term 'multiple deprivation' in an attempt to link 'social and economic disadvantage', led to some of the first urban policies being brought into play. This engendered policy solutions which could supposedly lift people up and out of such poverty through initiatives such as the Urban Programme (1964 – 1968), Community Development Projects or CDP's (1969), the Comprehensive Community Programme or CCP (1973 – 1975) and the Inner Area Studies or IAS (1968 – 1977).

Community Development Projects or CDP's introduced by the governments' 'Children's Department' in 1969, consisted of twelve such projects in deprived urban areas, representing possibly one of the most ambitious government action projects, at a cost of £5 million. Key players included local government, CDP action teams and an increasing role for the voluntary sector who sought to engender a 'self help' approach amongst communities. Operating on an area basis, 'teams' of practitioners, including social workers, psychologists and academic researchers would seek to target deprived populations and implement various interventions to tackle the problem. However, Atkinson and Moon (1994) note how Marxist critiques at the time, subsequently led to the mobilisation of whole communities challenging government about the 'structural' causes of poverty.

The little known Comprehensive Community Programme or CCP was introduced in 1974 by the Home Office as 'a new strategy for tackling urban deprivation' (Higgins et al 1983, p84). The creation of the Urban Deprivation Unit was intended to 'comprehensively plan policies to tackle deprivation' by assigning responsibility for the review of inter-departmental policies to the Home Secretary. The main driving force behind this new joint approach, announced by the Home Secretary at the time, Robert Carr, was in acknowledging the 'wide range of problems' which could not be tackled individually but which required an 'all-systems approach' (p89).   The subsequent policy analysis and review of urban deprivation, or PAR as it came to be known, resulted in a major review of the causes of deprivation, based on visits to areas of deprivation, reviews of the literature and discussions with academics and researchers, both in the UK and US (p94). Findings from the review, noted the presence of the previously referred to 'pockets' of deprivation in towns and cities based on perceived problems of low income, unemployment, disability as well as poor services

(p96).   Subsequently, the CCP proposed 'new partnerships between residents, local authorities, regional authorities and central government' based on initially identifying around fifty CCP areas in England, with around 10,000 population and a budget of around £100 per head population. However, in keeping with the findings of Kleinman and Whitehead (1999) Higgins et al (1983) also noted how despite the subsequent discovery in the PAR review, that 'most people in deprived areas were not deprived and that most deprived people did not live in deprived areas' (see Chapter 2), the focus on areas still continued. This, they suggest was linked to broader debates at the time in local government about the need for a department in Whitehall to be seen to take a leading role in this policy arena, as they describe in more detail here:

> "First and foremost, the Home Office's role as lead department on urban deprivation was crucial. The Home Office's experience in this area was focused on the area approach, through the CDP and Urban Programme, and while as noted already, its experience of the latter was becoming an increasingly unhappy one, it was still wedded to this strategy. Indeed, before the PAR was completed, the Home Secretary had agreed to the GLC's setting up two pilot 'deprived area projects' and obtaining grant aid for these" (Higgins et al 1983, p97).

As a result of this, Higgins et al (1983) describe the impact of the CCP in terms of policy failure, which according to them, was based on an array of difficulties associated with the institutional arrangements within government:

> "Any attempt to analyse the reasons for this failure involves a consideration of the development of joint planning within Whitehall, the role of the Treasury,

relationships between the Home Office and other main spending departments, the role played by ministers and civil servants, the power of parliament, relations between central and local government, and the secrecy of the government system" (Higgins et al 1983, p87).

Latterly, Inner Area Studies (IAS) introduced by the department of the environment in 1972, consisted of three experimental projects in Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth. IAS's were successful in highlighting the interconnectedness of the urban problems and advocating a shift in resources to the inner cities.   Indeed the aim of IAS was to recommend future policy initiatives, but following the final report, this led to a gradual shift away from a social pathology approach towards an economic approach. The idea of 'concentrations of poverty' also continued to play a role in issues of education and race, following an influx of immigrant workers to the UK during throughout the 1950's. Here, it is argued that policy incentives at the time were seen to be used as a form of appeasement with white liberal voters who were concerned about the discrimination faced by immigrants in securing housing and employment, whilst the area based approach allowed government to intervene to improve conditions for immigrants inadvertently, because of their high concentration in those areas, being addressed (Higgins et al 1983, p36).

1977- 1979 – INNER CITY DISCOURSE

Atkinson & Moon (1994) show how the emerging structural debate in the late 1970's provided a 'window of opportunity' for adopting an economic approach to tackling the urban problem. Key policy changes were secured through the 1977 White Paper; Policy for the Inner Cities which sought to improve economic, physical and social environment in

addition to finding a better balance between population shifts and the types of jobs available. Thus, the Inner Urban Areas Act (1978) set out to create partnerships between the private sector and voluntary sector in key inner city areas of the UK by attracting businesses to invest in inner city areas. Overarching partnership committees served by senior officials with an interest in regeneration were established, supported by 'teams' of officers and staff whose job it was, to interpret and implement the challenges locally. However, Lawless (1989) shows how tensions surrounding joint planning and the redirection of funding from other government departments led to much of the programme remaining nothing more than a mere 'administrative idea'. Wilks-Heeg (1996) suggests that in the broader context of economic decline throughout the latter part of the 1970's, a neo-liberalist, new right approach appeared to pave the way for economic and property led regeneration, bringing with it private sector investment. By this time, inflation had soared and unemployment was at an all time high as the traditional manufacturing base, on which most of the cities had been premised, had started to decline.

POST 1979 – ENTERPRISE CULTURE

It has been argued that in the midst of the conservatives return to power in 1979, urban problems subsequently became framed by the 'primacy of the market' which was seen to be in need of facilitation by the private sector. Mossberger & Stoker and Stoker (1997) note how at this time, the Thatcher administration saw the urban problem as an inherent failure of the welfare state, stimulating a need to introduce greater individual responsibility for welfare through introducing 'free market economics'. Such freeing up the market or 'rolling back of the state' as it was known, was perceived to reduce dependency on the welfare state and help to build a public sector which 'facilitated' growth rather than being directly

responsible for it (Atkinson & Moon 1994).   In keeping with this, Stewart (2003) notes how Thatcher's distaste for the public sector at this time led to assumptions about it being too big and too bureaucratic. Such growth was intended to create a 'trickle down' effect through encouragement to invest in poorer areas, on the basis that government subsidies would open up greater employment opportunities (Atkinson and Moon 1994). The notion of 'boosterism' was also encouraged through property led developments in areas suffering economic decline (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001). A sense of altruism was also engendered in the business community through initiatives such as Business in the Community. However, the mechanism by which wealth would actually 'trickle-down' was never really clarified (Atkinson and Moon 1994). In addition, the property aspect of regeneration was subject to volatile changes in the economy. This meant that not only did investment fail to reach the poorest locally, but local investors were also at risk during recession with high interest rates and the oversupply of property in the market.

1991-1998 A NEW LOCALISM IN URBAN POLICY
The City challenge programme initiated in 1991 was designed to bring together the public, private and voluntary sectors to work through 'top-down' partnerships (Wilks-Heeg 1996). For the first time, this widened the interpretation of the urban problem, by including schools, police as well as universities (Mossberger & Stoker and Stoker 1997). It also represented a significant change in the government's approach towards local authority involvement which, instead of being marginalized under Thatcher, was brought back into the fray through the enticement of cash incentives to lever in involvement from private and voluntary sector partners under the new partnership approach (Wilks-Heeg 1996). This framing of the urban problem in terms of a lack of joint working between agencies remained

strong throughout this period. For example, the introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and City Pride, where key cities such as Birmingham, London and Manchester were asked to produce a vision or plan based on their aspirations for the future. Stewart (1994) shows how SRB brought back the competitive element of regeneration policy by asking local authorities to bid for funds competitively on the basis of working in partnership with other agencies. However, concerns about short-termism emerged as Urban Development Corporations and City Challenge began to place a heavy drain on the public purse, raising questions about the level of subsidy being offered to the private sector. For instance, Wilks-Heeg (1996) describes how the Urban Development Companies (UDC) was heavily subsidized by government to pursue such land-based regeneration, without the collaboration of local government, through 'grant-in-aid' (Wilks-Heeg 1996, p1267). One well documented example of a UDC programme involved the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) which sought to regenerate the area for employment and housing. But the subsequent shift away from a social approach towards a more material one came back to haunt government. Land prices rose, and property prices soared allowing the LDDC greater financial freedom, from reliance on government grant-in-aid, and consequently creating a property boom for LDDC, but leaving them under less and less political control (Wilks-Heeg 1996). A crisis emerged for government when LDDC ended up having to respond to demands for better local transport provision through the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), the cost of which they hadn't anticipated. Following the collapse of the property market and the subsequent collapse of the LDDC, Wilks-Heeg (1996) shows how this led to an embarrassing exchange in which government were heavily criticised for the unending cost of such enterprising ventures (p1269).

POST 1998 SOCIAL INCLUSION DISCOURSE

As Labour returned to power in 1998, an emerging 'third way' was apparent in government, repealing both the socialist and the neo-liberal ways of the past, and introducing a new form of governance thereby 're-fashioning' the relationship between government, local government and communities (Newman 2001). Johnston and Coaffee (2007) note how this interest in the participation of community was coupled with a drive for efficiency, underpinned by the previous governments' interest in 'new public management' approaches (Hughes 2002, Hood 1991), and the subsequent modernisation agenda, shaped many of the regeneration initiatives at this time. With the introduction of Neighbourhood Renewal, there was an acknowledgement of the need to learn from past failures. This framing of the urban problem in terms of 'tackling social exclusion' represented a fundamental part of achieving the goals of Neighbourhood Renewal and was tied into notions of public sector failure to deliver adequate public services to poor communities. A 'mainstreaming approach' emerged as a means of influencing mainstream services to tackle the urban problem as part of their core business. Initiatives such as Single Regeneration Budget (inherited from the previous government), New Deal for Communities, various 'Action Zones' (i.e. Education Action Zone (EAZ); Health action Zone (HAZ); and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders would now be delivered in the form of 'bottom-up partnerships incorporating business, the voluntary sector, the public sector and for the first time, communities. But as with previous initiatives, criticism leveled at the short-termist nature of regeneration led to many initiatives being superseded by newer ones before any evaluation work had been conducted on them. This, according to Diamond et al (2007), has placed enormous pressure on public sector staff and agencies trying to grapple

with the next new fad. Further, they suggest that the involvement of voluntary sector 'think tanks' such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has somewhat 'marginalized' the learning from current regeneration practice, by limiting their 'access to key actors' in the policymaking arena.

Having broadly examined the different ways in which urban policy problems have been framed, the discussion now turns to considerations of the extent to which these different approaches have been framed according to higher level ideological and political discourses at the time. In keeping with the aims of this thesis, it is thus possible to examine whether the reasons for the persistence of ambiguity in urban policy outcomes is due to the way that policy problems have been constructed in line with higher level narratives, and the extent to which this has led to the excluding of certain issues and voices from the agenda.

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE PAST REGENERATION POLICIES BEEN FRAMED BY HIGHER LEVEL DISCOURSES?

By analysing the extent to which it is possible to locate such discourses within their institutional context, Atkinson (2000) examines the ways in which the urban problem has been legitimised over a 30 year period based on differing ontological and epistemological viewpoints (that is, through considering differing ways of constructing reality). As a result, he concludes that institutions come to operate according to a dominant discourse at the time, which determines whether or not an issue is perceived as a problem:

> "Generally speaking, dominant discourses and discourse coalitions will have been institutionalized within specific institutions/organizations governing their operating procedures, modes of conceptualization and forms of action. Thus they operate from

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within a particular structure of power which provides a stage from which to frame the way that a problem is constructed and guarantees an 'audience' which will listen" (Atkinson 2000a, p214).

By examining the way that past governments have framed the regeneration debate then, it is possible to see how urban policy institutions have seemingly become tied to a particular set of rules which then frame the nature of the policy that is produced, helping to 'keep issues on or off the agenda' by 'internalising structures' and 'setting boundaries' within which the dominant discourse can function (Atkinson 2000, p217). Adopting a similar stance, Mossberger & Stoker and Stoker (1997) suggest that governments achieve this by assuming a certain value base which helps 'legitimize' certain policies in the public imagination by 'touching on raw nerves' and building voter capacity. From this perspective, this suggests that by looking for evidence of higher level narratives then, we can begin to explore the nature of these higher level discourses such as Keynesianism, neo-liberalism and third way to analyse the extent to which they might have shaped and constrained the way urban policy problems have been constructed over time.

In analysing the construction of the urban policy problem over a 30 year period from 1968 to 1998 then, Atkinson's (2000) suggests that the early framing of the urban problem in social pathology terms was the result of a dominant 'Keynesian-social-democratic consensus'; a post war economic management technique in which the government tried to intervene in the economy to achieve full employment and a welfare state by manipulating levels of spending and taxation in order to keep employment high. According to Atkinson (2000), the framing of the urban problem in this way assisted in promoting a view that

poverty was no longer a problem because of the high levels of state intervention and that any remaining deprivation must be down to a failure of the public to take advantage of the full range of opportunities on offer:

> "The dominant belief within the British political elite was that by the mid 1950s full employment and the welfare state had eradicated the social conditions which characterised the inter-war period and that problems of poverty had largely been eliminated" (Atkinson 2000a, p217).

Drawing on the apparent symbolism behind the Community Development Projects (CDPs) at this time, Wilks-Heeg (1996) finds favour with this dominant Keynesian view suggesting that such framing assisted in giving urban policy its somewhat experimental nature (which he argues successive governments have also made use of at different times). He suggests that by referring to projects as 'experimental', it offers government an opportunity to terminate projects if funding is cut or indeed, if they fail to fulfill the broader goals of a Keynesian economy; to achieve full employment through intervention in the economy. To justify this, Wilks-Heeg (1996) draws on the argument of Flynn who first evaluated the impact of the CDPs to show how despite their apparent socialist ideals, regeneration projects at the time were constrained to operate within a certain set of criteria to maintain commitment to the wider goals of a Keynesian ideal:

> "Flynn's account, which is in the neo-Marxist style popular at that time, argues that urban policy in a social democracy is subject to the following specific constraints. First, material constraints required that CDPs and the IASs did not interfere with the continued role of social policy as a means of preserving a reserve army of labour.

Secondly, while political pressures had pushed the government into launching high profile initiatives in response to genuine fears about disorder…the government sought to respond by minimizing resource implications and the impact on the political and administrative systems. Thirdly, ideological constraints dictated that there should be an adherence to the 'culture of poverty view' of urban social problems." (Wilks-Heeg 1996, p1265).

In demonstrating the influence that Keynesian approaches might have had on the way that urban problems were framed then during this period, Wilks-Heeg (1996) implies that as a result urban policy had a somewhat symbolic feel, based on the need of government to perpetuate a broader view about the governments successful attempts at welfare reform, rather than detract from it by acknowledging a persistence of poverty in some areas. Hence, the idea of a dominant Keynesian ideology framing the way that urban problems are constructed remains a highly convincing one. This is in spite of counter challenges by some, that key decision makers at this time failed to subscribe to any dominant view, instead choosing to adopt a more Do-It-Yourself (DIYE) approach in the form of politics which involves factoring in contextual issues seen to be hindering the process (Henderson 1986).

The alleged 'shift' that took place away from a Keynesian ideology towards a context in which a neoliberal ideology flourished, has been characterised in the wider context of British post-fordist regime (Hughes 2006, p168). Post-fordism is a term used to describe a shift away from mass production and consumption of goods (i.e. the Ford motor car) towards the production of more specialized goods. It describes the shift in markets towards the production of more diversified luxury goods. In urban policy terms, Wilks-Heeg (1996)

talks about the shift towards a neo-liberal era in the context of a 'post-fordist' economic crisis which he suggests resulted from a profitability problem where large scale production could be manufactured more cheaply on a more global scale. Drawing from Painter (1995), Wilks-Heeg (1996) shows how governments' in the West lent heavily on this approach at the time, leading to the production of the inner cities white paper, in an attempt to tackle what was perceived to be a crisis of the inner city (p1265). However, they also note how in focusing on the economic aspects of decline, the social elements were subsequently ignored. Atkinson & Moon (1994) note how for some, this contributed to the 'high-density, high-rise development' policy in the inner city, whilst elsewhere the building of New Town developments resulting in the planned dispersal of inner city populations to areas outside of the city (p26). Consequently, although such developments were based on assumptions about the need for 'a balanced social mix, and a self generating and self contained labour market', in fact, it was a failure to assess the social impacts on either New Towns or the inner cities which ultimately resulted in the validity of a physical approach being questioned:

> "The physical approach may have seemed at first to be a comprehensive and coherent strategy to deal with the urban problems facing post war Britain. In fact, it was nothing of the sort. At best, the initiatives represented a 'hotchpotch' of well intentioned but often contradictory legislation. At worst they disguised the true nature and scale of problems and set in motion unforeseen and unwanted consequences. Most importantly the social aspects of urban problems were largely ignored." (p26).

The idea that as a result of the physical framing urban policy problems, social problems were largely ignored is in keeping with a well trodden critique about the failure of so called 'neo-liberal policies' to tackle social inequality (Harvey 2006). However it could also be argued that as a concept, neo-liberalism is a highly complex, diverse and contested term whose meaning has repeatedly shifted over time (Fuller & Geddes 2008, p255). For instance, Raco (2005, p328) shows how despite its apparent emergence in the 1970/ 80's in response to tackling the ills of Keynesianism, the term 'neo-liberalism' actually has many meanings. He suggests that it is more helpfully considered in terms of a 'rolling-back' and 'rolling out' period. According to Raco (2005), the former 'roll-back neo-liberalism' consists of a 'rolling back of the frontiers of the welfare state and savage critiques of the capacities and practices of post-war state management', whilst the latter 'roll-out neo-liberalism' relates to a more 'purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberal state forms, modes of governance and regulatory mechanisms' (Peck & Tickell 2002, p37). This is markedly different to the classical liberalism approach alluded to by Harvey (2006) in his critique of neo-liberalism which, amongst other things, promoted the 'primacy of private property', 'free choice in consumption' and a 'night-watchman role for the state' (Harvey 2006, Cited in: Jessop 2002, p108).

Taking this argument further, Fuller and Geddes (2008, p255) show how these 'deep taken for granted beliefs in neo-classical economics' form the basis of institutional ideas which in themselves act to constrain the way that policy is determined. For instance they suggest that ideas involving the 'favouring of free market solutions to economic problems' arise from normative views or assumptions about the meaning of neo-liberalism. They also show how policy intentions in the 1980's and 1990's, which sought to 'promote a lean welfare

state with low taxation and flexible labour markets', formed the basis of the dominant political viewpoints. However, they also highlight how in doing so, such analysis has largely ignored the 'broader social, economic and political processes affecting the state. Ultimately, they suggest that this leaves the role of dominant ideologies in framing the policy debate, largely unanswered.

Such arguments form the basis of critiques in critical geography about the role of dominant ideology in that despite it being proposed that a shift had occurred towards a third way ideology, in which New Labour sought to balance the ills of a neo-liberal market based ideology with that of social justice, there is evidence of the continuation of a strong neo-liberal element too (Fuller & Geddes 2008). For instance, according to Fuller and Geddes (2008, p260), the idea that communities should be taking a greater part in government decision making across regeneration, education, local government and health through new forms of citizenship laid the foundations for a new type of contract between individuals and the state stressing their rights to public services in exchange for the responsibility to work. Inherent within such policies they suggest, was the notion of 'opportunity for all', which sought to promote access to skills training on the basis that; "through increased and more effective skills training, we will ensure a fairer society by giving everyone the opportunity to fulfill their potential through lifelong learning" (DWP 2003). However, they also point out how despite New Labours' return to power, thereby signaling a shift away from the Thatcherite denial of poverty through the well known maxim; 'there is no such thing as society', in reality New Labour continued to maintain a focus on a neo-liberal agenda by seeking to extend neo-liberalist ideas by instilling policy with a competitiveness agenda. In doing so, they show how the processes of modernization through managerialism and

privatization are actually more demonstrative of a network governance role involving both hierarchies and markets, which ignore the broader social, economic and political processes affecting the state.

This debate about the normative nature of so called 'dominant ideologies' such as Keynesianism and neo-liberalism, loom large in urban geography circles and are based on examining the tensions and contradictions which are produced as a result of the competing role of economic development in achieving economic growth at the same time as achieving quality of life (Jonas & Ward 2007). As an example of this, McCann (2007) notes a shift towards regional competitiveness in the context of income inequalities and the tensions that emerge between maintaining economic competitiveness and livability (quality of life) at the same time. In it, he questions whether the two are mutually compatible in terms of value base (p188). In place of such confusion, McCann (2007) goes on to describe how the term 'city regions' has subsequently developed as "a concept with a specific history and with a present manifestation that seems to incorporate particular discourses on and state strategies toward society and place" (p188). In contrast to previous forms of regionalism, he suggests that city-regions describe the modern day context in which economic growth is said to take place. Jonas and Ward (2007) also describe city-regions as 'the site of exchange, innovation, development and competition' (2004, p2121 In: McCann 2007). Inherent within this notion is the ability of cities to attract economic growth whether in the form of inward investment, jobs or wealth generating residents and with it, they suggest a narrative around the knowledge economy and the ability of cities to produce wealth using their creative talent. As a consequence of this perpetuated narrative, McCann (2007) concludes

that 'the city-regional livability agenda can best be understood as a geographically selective, strategic and highly political project'.

It is in highlighting the nature of such tensions and contradictions that several authors have begun to question whether what currently exists in urban policy discourse is not so much a 'dominant neoliberal ideology', but rather a hybrid of approaches in which several discourses co-exist (Raco 2005, Fuller and Geddes 2008). The implications of such important claims on the future success of urban policy are picked up by D'Albergo (2010) who in his tri-fold documentary review of the social, institutional and political influences on EU policy frames, questions how urban policy continues to receive so much attention, given the existence of different gaps and inconsistencies which persist. For instance; 'socially', in integrating social and economic outcomes (p147); 'institutionally', though the inability to decipher a clear link between agenda setting and policy responses whose goals shift over time (p147); and 'politically' through the 'convergence and divergence' between both left and centre right political approaches. In short, he asks how we can make sense of the continued approach in the face of such elusive outcomes. D'Albergo (2010) suggests that the 'direct' and 'indirect' policies which emerge are the result of highly symbolic policy which exists as a consequence of hegemonic, multi-layered levels of governance where several strategies appear to co-exist at the same time. This in also keeping with Newman's (2001) observation that such shifts in ideology rarely constitute a simplistic transition from one idea to another, but rather signals an amalgam of ideas which contain both 'new' as well as 'old' ideas from the past. Indeed, this would suggest that both 'new' higher level discourses rarely replace 'old' ones, but rather they co-exist, creating yet more ambiguity based on the numerous tensions and contradictions produced. In keeping with Newman's

(2001) idea that in order to understand the way that ideology interacts with 'the relationship between ideologies and discourses, the constitution of identity and social action' (p30), this suggest there is much to be gained from adopting a more critical approach to urban policy analysis which draws on theories of power.

The contribution brought by critical geography and political science to the ambiguity debate is unrivalled. However, what these approaches all fail to consider is not only the ontological nature of these discourses but how they interact in practice; that is whether they speak to one another, or indeed whether one in particular dominates. For instance despite the important observation by Fuller and Geddes (2008) that neo-liberalism is a highly complex, diverse and contested term whose meaning has repeatedly shifted over time (p255) they make no claim about the ontological nature of contemporary discourses which are argued to co-exist. Similarly, despite Raco's (2005) claim that the term 'neo-liberalism' actually has many meanings (p328) it is not clear how the multiple discourses which now exist, actually operate in terms of preventing and privileging different actions. This is echoed in Newman's observation about the presence of multiple discourses which co-exist. This means that despite D'Albergo's important call for more research into this increasingly complex area of policy, what all of these authors fail to account for is the need to situate such persistent and enduring debates within a wider, more critical context, which examines the role and influence that power plays in determining what is ruled in and what is ruled out.

In keeping with the goals of this thesis, the ability to examine urban policy from its social and political context is vital in explaining *why* ambiguity persists and how actors cope. What this suggests is that if we are to better understand the reason for persistent ambiguity in

regeneration policy goals, we must shift our gaze away from new-institutionalist notions of framing as a theory of governance, towards more critical approaches to policy analysis which take into account the contingent factors which might play a part in shaping how policy is understood. Hence, in contrast to social constructivist approaches to policy analysis as a means of surfacing the assumptions of policy (Chapter 2) and new-institutionalist theories of framing as a means understanding how policy problems have been constructed (Chapter 3) what this highlights is the limitations of sense making approaches to conceptualizing policy, because it fails to represent the increasingly complex socio-political context in which policy goals are made. This suggests that in order to ascertain the reasons for persistent ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes, it is necessary to adopt a more critical approach which takes into consideration not only the nature of tensions and contradictions that emerge in policy discourse but also some of the political reasons for their existence. This new and emergent area of critical policy analysis is discussed in Chapter 4, along with an appraisal of the ontological assumptions of different approaches to discourse.

CONCLUSION

In the context of contested debate about the ontological meaning of higher level discourses, the idea by Raco (2005) that the so called 'third way' dominant ideology doesn't actually exist, but is an amalgam of previous neo-liberal ideology and social democracy, would appear to hold water. This is in keeping with the findings of Newman (2001) that multiple discourses co-exist. Such conclusions speak to debates in political science about the increasingly complex nature of policy making, not only in terms of its capacity to produce ambiguous outcomes but also the tendency for tensions and contradictions to occur. The

utility of such continued debate in regeneration policy highlight the valuable role that critical approaches might play in analysing not only the hidden assumptions of policy goals *between* different discourses but also of the inherent contradictions and tensions of policy *within* discourse, as Newman usefully describes:

> "The focus on discourse enables us to assess governance as a complex, contested domain. One in which multiple forms of knowledge and power interact, and one in which multiple narratives, assumptions and expectations shape social action and guide decision making" (Newman 2001, p30).

However, what is missing from this important work is evidence of the ontological nature of such discourses. This means that despite surfacing important contradictions and tensions in discourse, it is unclear how they interact and who and what is privileged as a result. This calls for a deeper understanding of the nature of discourse and the way that context serves to shape and constrain what it is possible to think, see and do. This suggests that by seeking to critically unpick the ontological assumptions behind regeneration policy goals it is necessary not just to 'unpick' the linguistic elements of policy (in terms of what actors 'say and do') but to 'deconstruct' policy in terms of its discursive elements. Based on this more critical analysis, this seemingly has much more to offer in understanding the likely reasons for ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes from a more political context and forms the basis of Chapter 4, to examine the ontological nature of discourse.

Political era	Social context (UK and US) (Harvey 2006)	Dominant ideology (Harvey 2006)	View of urban policy problem (Atkinson & Moon 1994)	Urban policy solutions (Atkinson & Moon 1994)
1950 - 1960s	Wartime coalition Post world 2nd WW Social democratic state Redistributionist Public expenditure Welfare state, growth years	Keynesianism	Slum clearance Sanitizing and re-developing run down cities Modernize the urban fabric	New Towns Regional Assistance to help business move to new areas
1960s	Crisis of capitalism Capital accumulation	Global stagflation?	Housing and overcrowding still seen as problem Remaining poverty seen as pockets of poverty Failure of individuals to take advantage of opportunity Pull people up and out of poverty using spatial targeting	Urban Experiments (1968 – 1977) Community Development Projects (CDPs 1969) Inner Area Studies Comprehensive community programmes (CCPs)
1973	Breton woods system Britain IMF bailout New York Bankruptcy Arab-Israeli War OPEC oil embargo Regulated international economic relations	Collapse of Keynesianism	State-centred explanations (Stoker 1997) Attempt to maintain economic stability in areas of decline Programme involved Local Government but nature of central local government relations shifting Start of area based approach	General Improvement Areas Housing Action Areas Urban Programme (1964 – 1968) Economic revitalization
1975	Emergence of New Right University of Chicago Institute of economic affairs (Hayek, Friedman), Influenced Thatcher who abandoned Keynesianism	Neo-liberalism?	Attempt to limit inflation thru freeze on public sector pay thru agreement with trade unions (winter of discontent)	
1979	Conservative (Thatcher) Supply side solutions to cure stagflation Rolling back the state - Revolution in fiscal/ social policies (confront trade unions/ attacking social solidarity& professionals/ restructuring welfare state) Reduction in taxes to encourage foreign investment	Neo-liberal Neo-Conservative Monetarism	Full extent of urban decline becoming clear (Atkinson & Moon 1994) Deindustrialization; urban/ rural shift North/South divide	Boosterism (Atkinson and Moon 1994) Waterfront development & luxury housing to generate interest in an area and further investment (i.e. London Docklands) Partnership with business Incentives to promote business to clear & develop derelict sites Top-down partnerships
1997	Labour Third way Social justice Market based ideology Globalisation	Managerialism	Neighbourhood Renewal Urban Renewal Continuation of SRB	Bottom up partnerships
2007	Labour	Post structural	Re-structuring of state space	City Regions

TABLE 3: WIDER POLITICAL CONTEXT OF URBAN POLICY (ADAPTED FROM HARVEY 2006 AND SUPPLEMENTED WITH MATERIAL FROM ATKINSON & MOON 1994)

CHAPTER 4

THEORIES OF DISCOURSE, THE SHIFT FROM A LINGUISTIC TO A DISCURSIVE TURN AND CRITICAL APPROACHES TO POLICY ANALYSIS

"The surpassing of great intellectual traditions never take place in the sudden form of a collapse, but in the way that river waters, having originated at a common source, spread in different directions and mingle with currents flowing down from other sources" (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, p5)

INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the broader aims of this thesis to explore the ambiguous nature of regeneration policy outcomes, chapters 2 and 3 have so far sought to highlight the limitations of new-institutionalist/ constructivist approaches to policy analysis by demonstrating how claims about the symbolic nature of regeneration policy (which are argued to exists only to appease the voting public rather than achieve any real outcome), ultimately rely on theories of framing, which are rooted in structuralist theories associated with dominant ideologies, which in urban geography circles are increasingly being challenged (Raco 2005, Jonas and Ward 2007, Fuller and Geddes 2007). This is in keeping with critiques about the limitations of constructivist approaches which highlight their tendency to avoid discussions of power (Newman 2001, p30). Such concern is reflected in the emergence of critical approaches to discourse analysis as a means of accounting for the increasingly complex policy environment in which policy decisions are being made. Such a shift can be witnessed in broader sociological debates about the role that discourse plays in

policy, in the context of a general shift away from the study of language and its constituent parts towards an increasing concern with the socio-political context in which language is produced (Howarth 2000, Howarth & Torfing 2005). Such debates are reflected in questions about the ontological basis of organisational reality (Cederstrom & Spicer 2004) and whether it's constituent parts can be defined in linguistic terms or more discursive ones (Newman 2001). Ultimately, such debates are premised on emergent critiques about the ability of linguistic approaches to explain the hidden contradictions and tensions which emerge in policy (Howarth & Torfing 2005, Cederstrom & Spicer 2004). In the context of these wider debates, there is much scope in considering the role that more critical approaches might play in explaining how power might shape the way that policy problems are conceived. In the chapter which follows, we explore the emergence of these critical approaches by drawing on established critiques about the nature of discourse and its ability to explain social phenomenon. In creating a firm foundation for the rationale to this Doctoral research, the chapter then moves to suggest that despite the emerging complexity surrounding urban policy outcomes and the potential value of such critical approaches, there has been little attempt to operationalise such techniques in the context of regeneration policy.

> "Despite an increasing number of empirical studies of discourse, and the many books, 'there is still a dearth of books in the social sciences that systematically deploy a connected body of theory and methods in empirical studies of mainstream topics…many of which 'fail to reflect on methodological issues' (Howarth & Torfing 2005, p2).

This suggests there is much scope in operationalising the use of critical approaches to the study of ambiguity in regeneration policy in surfacing both the reasons for its continuation, and in exploring how actors manage any tensions which arise.

By means of some background setting in the context of the existing literature, Chapter 4 begins by considering what is already known about the nature of discourse in the broader context of sociological debates about the nature of social reality. The aim here, is to show how recent shifts in thinking towards a 'linguistic turn', have since become superseded by considerations of the socio-political context through a more 'discursive turn'. In keeping with the approach of previous chapters, the discussion then moves to considering how critical approaches have been applied and operationalised in wider policy and more specifically, regeneration policy. Following on from this, Chapter 5 goes on to present the rationale for applying a critical approach to exploring ambiguity in regeneration by drawing on Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony which is rooted in an 'articulation of lack' based on notions of a more fluid and shifting (rather than fixed) social reality.

THEORIES OF DISCOURSE

THE 'DISCOURSE ABOUT DISCOURSE'

The idea that social reality (i.e. the 'discursive') can be studied through what people say and do (i.e. social practices) has long been the study of discourse analysts. However, in keeping with other areas of sociological debate, discourse theory has been subject to its own 'internal' debate about its ontological and epistemological status (See Table 4 for a summary of the main debates about the ontological nature of discourse). Howarth (2000) captures this in his question about the ultimate

nature of discourse, by asking whether discourse constitutes a 'single utterance' or whether it 'constitutes the [entire] political and social world' (p6). He concludes by suggesting that in terms of 'the rules governing connected sets of sentences in speech and writing' (p6)....'there are no general accounts of the way in which the theories and methods of discourse analysis can be applied to this domain of study and research' (p2). This is because ontologically and epistemologically discourse analysis falls across a whole 'family of approaches' which differ according to ones view of social reality (Cederstrom & Spicer 2004). Consequently, despite its emergence originally as a critique of positivist approaches to studying the complex nature of social life, the study of discourse itself is subject to ongoing debates about its real meaning.

In making sense of the different approaches to discourse, Cederstrom and Spicer (2004) offer a useful means of categorising discourse according to its practical orientation towards text-based, textual action, or text, action and context. For instance, they suggest that text-based approaches focus on the nature of written, spoken and visual texts in organisations by seeking to surface the language, objects and acts associated with a given social phenomenon. On this basis, they suggest that through interpretation, it is possible to identify 'patterns of meaning and symbolism in texts' (p1). Separating 'text-based' approaches from those involving 'textual-action', Cederstrom & Spicer (2004) note the idealistic tendency of text-based approaches to viewing organizations as existing 'only in so far as their members create them through discourse' (Mumby & Clair 1997 Cited in: Cederstrom & Spicer (2004, p1). As a counter to the limitations of text-based and textual action

approaches, they suggest that 'text, action and context based' approaches are based on the idea that organisations can be studied by breaking down their component parts; that is their 'analytically isolatable parts', by examining the texts which constitute them (Fairclough 2005, p916).

It is perhaps in the course of this apparent shift towards considerations of the socio-political context that other theorists provide a more useful distinction, by highlighting the renewed focus on the broader ontological character of discourse. For instance, Howarth (2005) identifies four distinct social systems in which discourse can be said to be embedded. Positivist approaches to discourse are said to centre around the notion of 'cognitive framing' or shared ways of seeing and doing; Realist approaches are said to view social objects as having causal power; Marxist approaches (which draw on realist perspectives) focus on how structures cause 'uneven distributions of power and resources'; and Post-structural approaches highlight the 'incomplete and contingent' nature of discourse (Howarth 2005, p3). By tracing the historical development of such different approaches to discourse, Howarth & Torfing (2005, p6) discuss discourse in terms of a first, second and third generation discourse, with first generation discourse ultimately drawing on rational-scientific approaches to analysing the structure or the context in which such language might be produced. They describe a second generation discourse emerging in response to a growing need to consider the social and political context in which language is produced and the types of 'discursive acts' this might in turn lead to. Finally, they describe a third generation discourse as located in the so called 'crisis of Marxism' in which 'structuralist theories of language, culture and society' have been

questioned. In doing so, they note a distinct shift away from a 'linguistic turn' towards a 'discursive turn'. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to exploring the epistemological assumptions behind these different systems of meaning, and how they suggest that social reality is produced. Each section is followed by a discussion of some of the limitations of each approach in reaching a definitive view about the nature of social reality. Although by no means exhaustive, a brief summary of the main differences and limitations of each approach to discourse is provided in table 4 as an aide memoire to the main differences between the different approaches.

Positivist accounts of discourse

Law (2004) charts the shift away from searching for a 'single version of out-there-ness' towards more multiple versions of reality. Drawing on the classic works of Kuhn (1962) in: 'The structure of scientific revolutions', Law (2004) notes how through his analysis of the practices adopted in science, Kuhn (1962) 'drove a coach and horses through the empiricist and positivist version of science' by surfacing the apparent contradictions in the laws and practices of scientists based on their assumptions about what constitutes reality. Law (2004) roots his argument in three aspects of Kuhn's (1962) work, based on how scientists 'don't use law-like generalizations but implicit assumptions'; how they don't seek to generate new knowledge, but tinker around the edges by solving puzzles; and how in the event of any facts being contradicted, they 'rarely refute an argument replacing one paradigm with another', but instead engage in puzzle solving (p43). Such insights are in keeping with the earlier stated critique in Chapter 2 about the overly rational nature

of policy (see Stone 2001) which suggests that social reality is rather more complex. For instance, Law (2004) notices how 'what appears to be a singular reality' is in actual fact constructed of several different realities, each using different objects and practices to define their meaning. Using the case of the medical condition atherosclerosis, Law (2004) shows how treatment is based on differing perceptions about the nature of disease, its causes and how it should be assessed and measured (p53). Further, he shows how each view is perpetuated by its own respective linguistic 'objects' and 'practices' including, for instance atherosclerosis clinics, investigative radiology and the operating theatre. By observing actors in their situated contexts, Law (2004) notes how, it is possible to witness how they seek to cover up and explain away certain results or measurements, such as patients' own accounts of their illness which appear to contradict the expected course of the disease. Law suggests that although contradictory findings in clinical practice tend to be explained away as anomalies, they are in fact suggestive of the presence of multiple realities, rather than one singular view. This suggests that positive accounts of discourse emphasise the cognitive element by framing the way the world is seen and understood collectively in terms of a shared 'singular' view.

The suggestion that discourse might be better constituted of multiple viewpoints, is in keeping with a general shift towards a more 'linguistic turn' and a growing concern about the nature of language and the rules which must be adhered to in order for communication to take place (Howarth 2000, p17). Of particular interest was the way that rules might be affected by the societal structures in which social phenomena are embedded:

"Apparently unrelated events can be made intelligible by reference to a formal system of relationships" (Howarth 2000, p17).

This suggests that a linguistic approach to discourse involves identifying the things which give discourse its apparent structure in the way that words, symbols and other forms of communication serve to give it meaning. Indeed, Saussure states: language is a system of signs expressing ideas' (Saussure 1983, p15).   For instance, Howarth (2000) shows how the term 'mother' secures its meaning through its wider connection to 'father, grandmother and daughter' (p17). Usefully, Howarth (2000) goes on to show how the linguist, Strauss introduces the symbolic element into the study of language by suggesting that not all language is consciously expressed. Rather there is a symbolic element which lies beneath the surface but tends to express itself through other means such as dress, manners and customs. This is in keeping with the suggestion by Yanow (1996, 2001) that implicit meaning can be surfaced by looking for the symbolic artifacts; that is the language, objects and acts.

Discursive nature of social reality	Nature of discourse as concrete system of social relations	Methods used to identify social practices	Key theorists	Limitations and critiques
Positivist	Cognitive approach Rules of language Linguistic	Traditional policy analysis	Saussure Levi-Strauss	Actors are excluded Fixed nature of social relations
Idealist	Ways of seeing and doing Implicit assumptions in language Role of symbolism/ myths Hermeneutical approach	Framing of problems Interpretivist	Dvora Yanow Martin Hajer Frank Fischer	Neglects material conditions and power
Realist Marxist	Ideological nature of language Historical rules and conventions that structure meaning	Critical Discourse Analysis Critical Realism	Norman Fairclough Michel Foucault	Reductionist way of thinking Everything reduced to ideas and language (Howarth 2005, p12)
Post- Structural	"The play of the signifiers" "Language as pre-existing system of difference"	Deconstructive Genealogy Problematising	Jacques Derrida Michel Foucault Ernesto Laclau	Methodological deficit

TABLE 4: DEBATES ABOUT THE ONTOLOGICAL NATURE OF DISCOURSE (ADAPTED FROM HOWARTH 2000)

Although somewhat peripheral to the broader debates about discourse in much of the sociological literature, such interpretive approaches are more in keeping with a 'constructivist' rather than a 'positivist approach' to discourse. Although there is reference to a cognitive element in terms of shared ways of seeing and doing though the notion of 'framing', this is rooted in an idealist perspective which seeks to understand the meaning that actors assign to social phenomenon (Williams and May 1996). Here, Dryzek (1988 p710, following van Dijk 1985) describes it as 'a shared set of capabilities which enable the assemblages of words, phrases and sentences into meaningful texts intelligible to readers or listeners'. Highlighting the notion of 'language in use', Howarth (2005) shows how such approaches seek to 'connect speech with action' by stating an intention to do something. He demonstrates how this type of discourse analysis subsequently includes ethnographic approaches such as conversation analysis or interpretive analysis, which seek to explore 'how actors experience their world' (p7).

However, noting the idealistic tendency of text-based approaches to viewing organizations as existing 'only in so far as their members create them through discourse' (Mumby & Clair 1997 In: Cederstrom & Spicer (2004, p1), Cederstrom and Spicer (2004) suggest there is an over reliance on the 'role of symbolic frames to surface meaning' which ignores the structural context in which organisations are situated. Criticism is also leveled at the lack of behavioural or so called 'agentic response' from actors based on debates about how they might 'actively use discourse' to shape policy (p6). This has led some to suggest that 'in focusing on language and its practices, it divorces ideas from social reality' (Howarth 2005, p5).

Highlighting the perceived limitations of 'text-based approaches' in addition to those involving 'textual action' (Cederstrom and Spicer 2004) brings the importance of the social context to the fore, in shaping the way that discourses are formed. This more critical view of discourse involves analyses of the influence of power on social context. Such approaches can be summarised in terms of their capacity to offer a more 'realistic' and 'critical' view of the nature of social reality.

REALIST ACCOUNTS OF DISCOURSE

Realist accounts of discourse take an interest in the way that discourses are structured and produced in their historical contexts. The focus is on the way that 'discourses constitute the practices which form the social objects about which we speak' (Howarth 2005, p7). This particular approach highlights the importance of exploring the rules of a particular social system and the way the context at the time may have shaped and constrained what exists (p8). Howarth (2005) suggests that in contrast to more positivist accounts of discourse, realist approaches offer a more 'ontological dimension by studying the way that language is influenced by its material context'. Here, the social world consists of objects which interact with generative mechanisms to produce events (p3). Realism talks about 'language as a structured system in its own right' (rather than constructed in ones' head as with idealist views). However, such approaches retain a structural perspective since these objects are ultimately influenced by the 'social structure' in which they are situated (i.e. the state, the economy) and the way they 'reproduce and transform the material world' (p3).

Such perspective can be linked to critical theorist, Foucault's early work around the 'archeology of knowledge' Foucault (1969) in which he explores the way that discourse might be shaped by its historical context. In his seminal book 'Frameworks of power', Clegg (1989) shows how Foucault linked past constructions of power, built around crime and punishment, to ideas about 'sovereign power', based on their 'criminal deviance and rehabilitation' which is more focused on regulation and routine (p167). In his analysis, Clegg (1989) goes onto show how in the course of Foucault's early work, 'Discipline and Punish', such forms of punishment were forged through the bureaucratic administration of monastic life and feudalism (through daily ritual which controlled work practices, mealtimes, economic production and writing) (Bauman 1982 In: Clegg 1989). Later, drawing on Bauman, Clegg (1989) goes on to show how in the shift away from feudalism such practices led to early forms of capitalism in the 17th and 18th Century, as populations moved to towns and cities in search of work, and with it came a transfer in the concentration of power away from the royal households or landed gentry (formed of patrimonial and territorial rule). According to Clegg (1989), this increasing shift towards industrial capital, signaled a return to the 'disciplinary power' of old, by controlling the daily practices of millworkers through time discipline and surveillance (p172):

> "The dark satanic mills of Yorkshire and Lancashire simply latched onto the disciplinary apparatus already let loose from the monastery into the poor house, the work house, the orphanage, the barracks and so on" (Clegg 1989, p173).

From the perspective of studying organisations, Cederstrom and Spicer (2004) refer to realist approaches in terms of 'text, action and context' approaches and suggest that they act as a counter to the limitations of text-based and textual action approaches. In doing so they raise the idea that organisations can be studied by breaking down their component parts; that is their 'analytically isolatable parts', by examining the texts which constitute them (Fairclough 2005, p916). Here, drawing on Fairclough (2003), they note how language is inseparable from the social events in which they occur. Referring to all manner of language associated with written, spoken and visual media including newspapers, the radio, TV and the web as well as conversations and interviews, they show how as 'elements of social events', they can have 'causal effects' through the way that they influence the reader and contribute to a change in behaviour (Fairclough 2003, p8). As a consequence of this, they show how from a realist perspective, the linguistic (and as a result structural) construction of reality contributes to the perpetuation of certain ideologies, such as capitalism, and how discourse analysis should aim to 'test claims and commonly held assumptions by asking whether people have come to believe a fact and how their actions sustain that fact' (p10).

However, part of the criticism which is leveled at realist approaches to discourse pertains to its ontological nature (i.e. what discourse actually 'is') and the degree to which the discursive elements (i.e. what actors say and do) can be separated from the non-discursive elements of discourse (i.e. the social context in which discourse takes place) (Cederstrom & Spicer 2004, p4). Here, critics argue that it is impossible for discourse to be separated from its social context because it is that very context

which defines and constitutes it. The idea that what is important is not so much whether an object exists or not, but rather the meaning that actors assign to it, is described well by Laclau & Mouffe (2001):

> "The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism, idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'a natural phenomenon' or 'expressions of the wrath of God' depends upon the structuring of the discursive field" (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, p108)

Another criticism implicit within these ongoing 'ontological debates' about the nature of discourse is rooted in debate about whether discourse is constitutive of positive and present elements (i.e. whose meaning is fixed and can be located) or whether discourse has a more negative ontological character (i.e. whose meaning is contingent on context in terms of time and place). To demonstrate, Cederstrom & Spicer (2004) draw on Zizek (1989) to show how conceptions of national identity fail to centre on any one definition, but instead hovers around a shared feeling of solidarity, which is difficult to articulate:

> "The discourse of nationalism does not refer to a single set of characteristics associated with a nation state such as 'independence', 'freedom loving', or powerful'. Rather it refers to the indescribable feeling or substance which is

supposed to make up the national character" (Zizek 1989, In: Cederstrom & Spicer 2007, p4).

MARXIST ACCOUNTS OF DISCOURSE

Whilst classical Marxist accounts draw on similar ontological foundations in terms of realism, in 'the way that societal structures produce discourse', specifically they are interested in how these structures cause uneven distributions of power and resources' (Howarth 2005, p3). Indeed Howarth (2000) suggests that it is because of the pre-occupation of classical Marxism with 'the way in which human beings interact with nature to produce and re-produce the material conditions of existence' (p85), in which concerns about a 'superstructure' model of society emerged. According to Howarth (2000), this led to critiques about the 'reductionist and deterministic' nature of Marxist ideology, based on everything being reduced to notions of class struggle as a result of their 'non-ownership of the means of production' (p86). Such concerns are firmly rooted in debates about whether power is ultimately concentrated in the hands of a few (i.e. the state as bureaucratic elite) or whether it is more dispersed between the state and civil society in the form of 'hegemony' (Howarth 2000, p86). Clegg (1989) debates these various positions about the nature and constitution of power in his classic text *'Frameworks of power'* (Clegg 1989) suggesting that whilst traditional Marxist perspectives draw on the notion of a dominant ideology, Gramsci's idea of hegemony has a more sophisticated feel, based on societal consent. Defining hegemony as involving 'the successful mobilizing around reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups' (p160), he suggests that it is not the power replicated in the direct rule of

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the state (i.e. in terms of sovereign rule) but rather through the subordination of the public to this power through their compliance to follow rules and societal norms; that is a kind of self regulating power which Clegg (1989) describes as hegemonic or self-regulating power which sustains itself through a number of forms:

- "Taking systematic account of population interests and demands;

- Making compromises on secondary issues to mount support and alliances in an unstable political system;

- Organizing support for national goals which serve the long term interests of the dominant group;

- Providing moral, intellectual and political leadership in order to reproduce and form a collective will or normative population outlook (p160).

In keeping with the ideas of Gramsci, Clegg (1989) shows how instead of power being concentrated in the form of a sovereign state (as with a traditional Marxist perspective), Gramsci introduced the notion that power is more dispersed across all social life and is 'omni-present' everywhere.   Instead, Clegg (1989) suggests that a sort of 'hegemonic practice' is formed and maintained through a form of 'self management' in which power is witnessed through all forms of organizational life including the 'church, schools, trade unions and the mass media, and is articulated by intellectuals who develop ideologies and set the parameters of the educational system' (Clegg 1989, p160).   Clegg draws on Habermasian notions of legitimacy in getting the public to accept a particular social system through the use of 'formal democracy which gives the impression of having a voice through participation in decision making, although this is passive in reality (Clegg 1989, p162):

"In order to ensure that this public remains passive, it [i.e. participation] must occur only periodically, e.g. at elections and be based on civil privatism (i.e. people should mainly be pre-occupied about their own private interests and not engage in broader social communication and resolution of problems" (p162).

Despite this however, Clegg (1989) goes on to highlight Abercrombie's (1980) argument that despite Gramsci's more sophisticated feel, the idea still continues to draw on deterministic notions of class rule because Gramsci uses the theory to explain why class consciousness has still not yet developed to the point of revolution. Extending this, Howarth (2000) agrees that despite Gramsci's efforts to widen the meaning of 'ideology' to include a more conscious 'human will' (as opposed to false consciousness), his ideas are still constrained by the 'philosophical and methodological assumptions of Marxism' (p98) which suggest that social reality is determined by structural concerns. According to Howarth & Torfing (2005), such debates have resulted in concerns about the ontological status of discourse, typified in the development of a so called 'discursive turn' in which post-structural accounts of discourse are brought centre stage.

Post-structural accounts of discourse

In charting the emergence of post structural approaches to discourse, Howarth & Torfing (2005) locate the emergence of a third generation of discourse in a so called 'crisis of Marxism' in which they argue that 'structuralist theories of language, culture and society' increasingly began to be questioned. In doing so, they note a distinct shift away from a 'linguistic turn' towards a broader 'discursive turn'.

Drawing on post-structural accounts of discourse, and the work of Derrida, Torfing (2005) implies that it is as a 'consequence of giving up this metaphysical idea of a transcendental centre (whilst itself escaping structuration) that 'everything becomes discourse' (p8). As a result, it is in this 'refusal to take pre-given social structures or subjective interests as its privileged starting point' which tensions and contradictions arise. Indeed, it is in this 'anti-essentialist' or 'undecided' view of the social world' which Torfing (2005) suggests defines the very nature of post-structural theory, through its rejection of any prior assumptions which might privilege one form of knowledge over and above another:

> "The result is not total chaos and flux but playful determination of social meanings and identities in a relational system which is provisionally anchored in nodal points that are capable of partially fixing a series of floating signifiers" (Torfing 2005, p13).

Laclau & Mouffe (2001) note the gradual shift which has taken place since these earlier Marxist debates (since the 1970's) and its 'overly deterministic' nature (where everything is reduced to class struggle). They root this shift in what they term, a developing 'impasse' in terms of the gap between what capitalism could realistically achieve and the extent to which Marxism could respond (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, pviii). Hence, in their classic text; Hegemony and Socialist Theory', Laclau & Mouffe (2001) seek to demonstrate how the theoretically closed (pxiii) and fixed nature of Marxist and structuralist thought has become ill fitting with the shifting socio-political context over time (see Chapter 4 of Laclau & Mouffe 2001, for a thorough grounding in 'hegemony and radical democracy'). As a result they go on to demand

new 'starting points for social analysis' (px) by means of an overhaul of the ontological status of discourse which accounts for the changing patterns of democratic struggle which, they suggest now exists in the form of 'new social movements'. In doing so, they present the idea of the social as a 'discursive space' rather than one which is fixed in the context of past historical and hierarchical systems. Through his critique of Saussure's 'linguistic rules' which state that all social phenomena can be understood in the context of the existing social structure, Derrida shows how the privileging of the social in this way leads to the subsequent attempt to 'fix' meaning on a single object. Offering the example of how, in order for something to be remembered, it must run the risk of being forgotten, Howarth (2000) explains Saussure's approach through the suggestion that in order for something to exist, it has to have an opposite (p17). However, Derrida attacks these so called 'binary opposites' saying that they constitute privilege by stating the presence of an 'inside and an outside'. What Derrida suggests is more useful here is in being able to 'play with the discourse in an attempt to 'deconstruct' its hidden meaning.

In keeping with such a Derridan approach, Howarth (2000) shows how Laclau & Mouffe (2001) present a way of privileging of the political rather than the social by challenging the linguistic distinction between the discursive and non-discursive elements of discourse by suggesting that 'all objects and actions are meaningful' (Howarth 2000). In suggesting that there is no 'extra-discursive' element outside of discourse, what is implied here, is that i.e. that 'there is no distinction between the linguistic and the behavioural aspects of a social practice (Laclau & Mouffe 1985,

p104). Rather, it is as direct result of the 'precarious' and 'unfixed' nature of society, which gives rise to the 'contingent' and 'relational' nature of discourse where ideas are brought together, in a 'relational' way through the process of articulation:

> "The practice of articulation…consists of the construction of nodal points which partially fixes meaning and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, as a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity" (p113).

In advocating a theory of socialist hegemony then, Laclau & Mouffe (1985) draw on a range of structuralist, post-structuralist and Marxist critiques to show how such articulation develops in place of this lack of a structural centre. In doing so, Laclau & Mouffe (1985) attempt to show how the 'precarious nature' of discourse' is 'always threatened by something that is external to it'. Howarth (2000) suggests that they do this by developing perhaps the most comprehensive account of discourse by offering a theory of socialist hegemony based around the notion of 'social antagonism', 'political subjectivity' and 'hegemony' (Howarth 2000, p105).

From the perspective of social antagonism, it is suggested that because of the contingent and 'precarious' nature of discourse (i.e. it is not bound up in a particular social structure or dominant ideology) the meaning can never be fixed. However, in seeking to reach full identity, actors seek to 'foreclose and suture' meaning by drawing together ideas in a relational way, through the use of nodal points which serve to provide the discourse with a degree of temporary structure (Howarth 2000,

p105). Laclau & Mouffe (2001) refer to these nodal points as 'points de capiton' and suggest that is through their presence that the notion of the social arises as a 'discursive space through its relational 'undecidability' rather than its actual decidable links' (pxi). The idea that such lack is at heart of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) interpretation of the social is based on the contingent nature of discourse where meaning is not fixed but rather, constantly subject to change because of the shifting political context:

> "Discourses are contingent and historical constructions which are always vulnerable to those political forces excluded in their production, as well as the dis-locatory effects of events beyond their control" (Laclau 1990, p31).

In exemplifying Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) work, Howarth (2000) goes on to show how such antagonisms assist in 'revealing the boundaries or political frontiers' (p106) of a debate by showing how they can no longer be maintained by any 'meaningful system of difference'. Instead, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) attempt to show, is how a 'logic of equivalence' is introduced, where shared views about an issue can come together under a common cause. To demonstrate, Howarth (2000) draws on earlier work examining the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa where different 'black consciousness' groups were seen to organize themselves around a common cause centred on removing 'white racism'. Howarth (2000) explains how in doing so, they sought to overcome that which threatened their identity, the essence behind social antagonism.

In terms of political subjectivity, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) show how politically the meaning of 'man' takes on a different form in a Marxist context, as a member of a

'property owning class' as opposed to 'man' as a member of the 'male population' in a more functionalist context (p116). We can also see similar shifts in meaning with the term 'feminism' over time, depending on the different understandings about the causes of women's oppression and whether this relates to their status within the family or as mode of production in work terms (p117). In fact, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) go on to show how this very acceptance of a single cause of such oppression has had an 'over-determining' effect where men and women are ultimately seen as 'polar opposites':

> "Over-determination among the diverse sexual differences produces a systematic effect of sexual division" (p117)

What Laclau & Mouffe (2001) are suggesting here, is that instead of the term, feminism having a single meaning, rather it is based on an imaginary system of difference created by the way the problem is politically constructed. Usefully, Howarth (2000) explains how Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony goes beyond traditional Marxist logic which is built on 'a logic of the social', where social divisions such as black, white, young old etc. which have been created by the system. Instead, he argues that the 'logic of the political' introduced an important dimension in terms of examining how these differences are dealt with in practice.

From the perspective of hegemony, it is on this contingent basis that discourse is said to be constructed or produced through hegemonic struggles. Torfing (2005) explains these in anti-essentialist terms as taking place as a result of the many decisions being taken by multiple actors which lack rational and coherent basis

because of the lack of a 'central bureaucratic figure'. For example, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) describe hegemony as 'a theory of the decision taken in an undecidable terrain'. Although Torfing (2005) argues that 'chaos is not the result', instead what appears are multiple discourses which Torfing (2005) argues, become hegemonic once a particular articulation is convincing enough to people in terms of its 'past, present and future events' (p15).

Bringing this discussion back in line with the aims of this thesis to explore the persistent failure of regeneration policy to reach its goals, what is especially useful here, is the capacity of critical approaches to surface and debate these hegemonic struggles by allowing an exploration of the way in which actors experience and manage these tensions in the course of complex negotiations of their daily practice. Taking these ideas forward to broader considerations of this thesis, there are opportunities here in examining the implications for the future of urban governance in the context of attempts to improve the capacity of regeneration to tackle the root causes of deprivation.

With this in mind, the final section moves to examine the utility and scope for applying such critical approaches (and more specifically, by adopting Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony) to the study of ambiguity in regeneration policy. The apparent dearth of material in this area is then used as a basis for explaining the rationale behind the need for this planned empirical research. Chapter 5 then follows with a detailed description of the methodological approach used in this study, both in terms of operationalising the critical approach

and its application in terms of recruitment and selection of a suitable sample from which to collect empirical data.

USING CRITICAL APPROACHES TO SURFACE THE CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS IN POLICY

Despite a definitive push, both in the political science literature and the urban geography literature, to surface the tensions and contradictions of policy, its application remains limited to confirming observations of the increasing importance of the role that context plays and power plays without much recourse to the ontological assumptions which underpin these very different perspectives. This is important as the ontological assumptions behind each approach to discourse, defines not only what questions it is possible to ask, but also the type of data it is possible to surface. For instance, in their chapter on 'Polity as Politics' (In: Howarth & Torfing 2005), Allan Hansen and Eva Sorrenson (2005) show how neo-institutionalist perspectives such as that of March & Olsen (1995) are limited by their constructivist underpinnings because of the 'fixed' way in which institutions are viewed in shaping the behavior of actors (p95).

Of particular note here, is Newman and Clarke's (1997) work around *'The Managerialist State'* (Clarke and Newman 1997 In: Newman 2001, p31) in which Newman suggests that contradictions and tensions arise out of the multiple narratives which have been created by superimposing 'new' narratives on top of 'old ones', as actors seek to grapple with the rules and norms of pre-existing institutional regimes. Here, Newman shows how such tensions are produced as a result of the 'interaction between bureau-professional regimes and new managerial regimes

produced a field of tensions' based on their inherently 'different forms of power; their different modes of decision making, and their different logics of appropriateness' (Newman 2001, p31). In doing so, Newman (2001) attempts to provide evidence of the way in which actors manage such tensions though different forms of displacement (i.e. by replacing existing regimes with managerialism); different forms of sub-ordination (i.e. directing decision making towards economic forms of managerialism); different forms of co-option (i.e. by translating professional concerns into managerial based concerns) and by different forms of appropriation (i.e. by drawing on managerial forms). Newman roots such tensions in the rise in New Public Management paradigm which she argues subsequently led 'not to a closure around the paradigm, but an unstable settlement between bureau – professional power and new managerialism', thus creating further tensions between:

> "bureaucratic and consumerist models of accountability; political centralization and managerial devolution; and older neo-taylorist styles of management and new managerialist focus on culture, excellence and entrepreneurship" (Newman 2001, p33)

According to Newman (2001) then, such tensions arise because actors' hands are tied from being too innovative because of persisting bureaucratic regimes at the same time as New Public Management approaches (NPM) which require a more innovative approach. As a consequence, she suggests that actors are required to both take risks at the same time as being tightly controlled through reporting or quality control to government (see figure 2).

Power is decentralized &
differentiated

SELF GOVERNANCE MODEL	OPEN SYSTEMS MODEL

Orientated towards continuity, order and stability ← → Orientated towards innovation and change

HIERARCHY MODEL	RATIONAL GOAL MODEL

Power is centralised
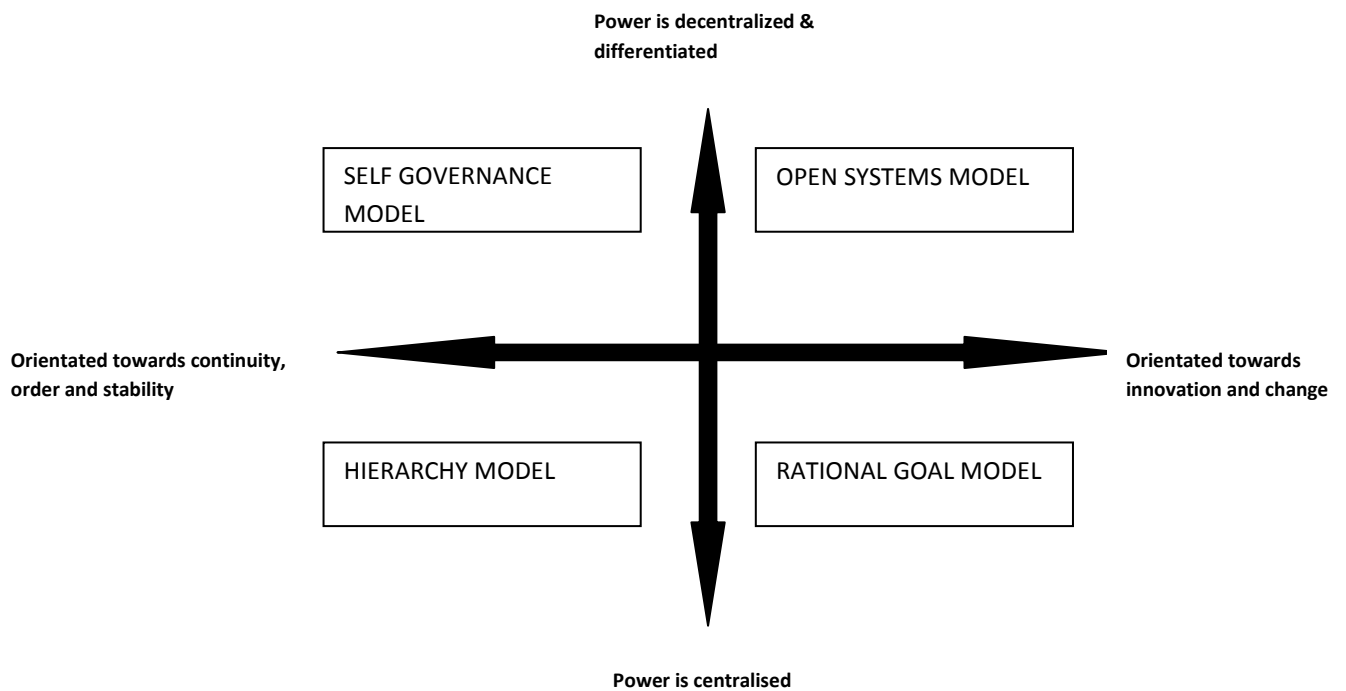
In de-constructing Newman's approach in order to examine its 'ontological status', what she appears to offer here is an observational account of the way in which the 'shifting patterns of governance', described earlier, have caused old discourses to become transposed (rather than replaced) on top new ones, and how this subsequently produces ambiguity in the form of tensions about who is ultimately responsible and what counts as success. This offers a convincing argument based around the 'co-existence of different discourses' which holds much appeal in the context of the broader aims of this thesis to search for possible reasons for ambiguity in regeneration. However, when considered from its broader ontological context, what Newman appears to be drawing from here, are somewhat institutionalist accounts of the struggle which arises between actors experience of 'bureau-professional regimes' and 'new managerial regimes' which she argued produces a 'field of tensions' which are 'subject to different forms of power;

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different modes of decision making, and different logics of appropriateness'
(Newman 2001, p31). Hence although, Newman points to the importance of context
in terms of the role that power plays she seems to be alluding to the fact that power
is still somewhat concentrated in the state, and that tensions arise as actors try to
wrestle control away from this through wider forms of governance. This can be
witnessed more clearly in Newman's quote below, which seeks to highlight the
importance of surfacing contradictions and tensions but avoids any attempt to
explore the rules which govern discourse, or what is ruled in and out as a result
(emphasis added):-

> "Tensions and dilemma's are not just of academic interest but provide the
> key to understanding the lived experience of public sector staff and the
> *dynamics of institutional change*" (Newman 2001, p33)

This idea about the increasingly 'contradictory nature' of policy is explored in an
urban context by McCann (2007) who offers a critical examination of the way that
concepts like 'city regions' and 'livability' are used interchangeably in urban policy
discourse and how this gives rise to tensions in delivering economic competitiveness
at the same time as delivering increased quality of life. Noting the avoidance of
discussion about such tensions in policy debates, McCann asks what this means for
the way policy is institutionalized, arguing that:

> "The disjuncture between these two views of regional livability creates a
>
> tension in contemporary city regionalism that is worked out through political
>
> struggles over such mundane issues as housing affordability and
>
> infrastructure provision" (McCann 2007, p189)

Taking a somewhat broader approach than Newman, McCann (2007) locates his argument in more critical accounts of discourse, by showing how the tendency to focus on lifestyle as assets for economic competition, whilst at the same time ignoring the broader inequality that co-exists, avoids vital discussion about the 'broader social relations of production and consumption' (p190).

Taking this notion of 'contradictory goals' further, Mckee (2009) draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality to show how shifts in the idea of governing through the state, towards a more self governing role has resulted in changes in the way that power is exercised; that is 'the space in which the problem of government is identified and solutions proposed' (p466). Here, she explains that instead of the state governing its citizens directly, instead it attempts to empower its citizens to actually *oversee and manage their own behaviour* as a means of legitimately receiving support and welfare from the state. Here, McKee (2009) talks about a kind of 'regulated freedom whose capacity for action' is used as a tool to achieve the ends of government (p470). She argues that it is in this shift, marked by a gradual devolvement of the responsibility from the state towards a greater empowerment and self esteem of its citizenry, which signals a particular tensions through its departure from traditional forms of governance (p470):-

- Individuals shaping their own subjectivities (through self empowerment and self esteem)
- Devolved responsibility from the state towards using 'active citizens as tools'
- A positive force for creativity, not just a repressive force

Similarly, drawing on debates about UK regeneration and social capital, Hughes (2009) suggests that critical realist approach to criminology allows a different set of questions to be asked, based on asking 'what constitutes a safer community'. In his discussion, he notes the contradictory role of cities in acting as both sites of creativity as well as sites of decay (p167). He also notes the city's broader role in acting as 'condensed sites for contemporary global flows' and also as a reflection of the 'localization of the global' and where 'the work of globalisation gets done'. This analysis leads Hughes (2009) to conclude that the expressions of social inequalities in cities are an expression of the spatial problems which exist in the form of clashes about 'urban glamour zones' and 'urban war zones' (p168) and suggests that the resulting desire is to cleanse the city of anything antisocial (such as immigrants, the poor and unemployed). In his analysis, Hughes (2009) goes on to show how regeneration is 'unquestionably' used in the war against crime and disorder and how this can be witnessed through demolition, rebuilding in post-fordist industrial cities.

Hence, as a result of adopting a critical realist approach, Hughes (2009) is able to describe these urban policy discourses as 'narratives of intention' which he suggests is evidenced in regeneration initiatives such as the S*afer Cities* initiative through its enterprise culture; the *SRB* initiative which linked crime prevention and community safety through CCTV, and neighbourhood wardens; and *Neighbourhood Renewal* which relied on partnerships as a mode of governance. However, by drawing on critical realism, Hughes is implying that there are generative mechanisms which can be sourced overcome, which not only implies a 'structural' element' but also relies on fixed understandings about what works and doesn't work.

As a counter to these arguments, and by drawing on post-structuralist approaches to discourse, Oscar Reyes (In: Howarth & Torfing 2005, p231) draws on Laclau & Mouffe (2001) to present a critical analysis of the tensions and contradictions between New Labour discourse in terms of its purported socialist/ collectivist ideal associated with promoting family values at the same time as having a strong work-based welfare policy. Using Laclau & Mouffe's theory of socialist hegemony, Reyes (2005) shows how each version of reality is brought together and organised 'as part of the same project' through nodal points associated with notions of the hard working family. To Reyes (2005) what this represents is an attempt to make a discursive shift away from tackling class-based inequalities in the 'old left' towards broader notions of community and the individual rights and responsibilities which are bound up with it (p231). Keeping this discursive shift in mind, Chapter 5 seeks to gather empirical evidence of the presence of such contradictions and tensions from the perspective of discursive lack.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

"Tensions and dilemma's are not just of academic interest but provide the key to understanding the lived experience of public sector staff and the dynamics of institutional change" (Newman 2001, p33)

INTRODUCTION

As the earlier chapters have shown, on the basis of overly rational claims about the failure of regeneration policy goals to meet with their 'intended' outcomes (Chapter 2) and the limited capacity of interpretive approaches to explain the symbolic aspects of policy owing to their reliance on constructivist theories of framing (Chapter 3); there is much scope in adopting a more critical approach to policy analysis by examining the broader social and political context in which policy problems arise (Chapter 4). In line with this shift in thinking, Chapter 4 went on to explore how shifts patterns of governance have led to a growing interest in the observing the changing nature of social reality. In the face of longstanding structuralist critique of discourse, the chapter concluded that post-stucturalist accounts of discourse have much to offer in making sense of the more irrational aspects of policy by considering it through the lens of discursive lack. Ontologically rooted in an anti-essentialist (where there are no pre-determined structures) and an anti-foundationalist (where there is no god) expression of social reality (Torfing 2005), such lack is argued to occur in response to the lack of a central bureaucratic figure in which actors seek to 'temporarily fix' meaning in a relational way through expressions of shared interests in a process known as articulation. Building on the detailed discussion about this in this last chapter, Chapter 5 seeks to offer a coherent rationale for the choice of methodology employed in the planned

doctoral research by exploring some of the reasons for the persistence of such ambiguity from a more critical perspective.

In order to achieve this, an ontological shift had to take place away from the planned interpretive policy analysis undertaken in stage 1 (which sought to surface the symbolic (or present) elements of discourse in the form of language, objects and acts expressed) (see appendix 1); towards a more critical approach which sought to surface the un-symbolisable (or negative) elements of discourse, in what Laclau & Mouffe (2001) have more appropriately termed, discursive lack.   Based on this shift in concern about the ontological nature of the research problem, Chapter 5 is divided into six distinct sections for ease:-

- The first section pertains to the ontological underpinnings of the research design and the rationale behind a two phase design for data collection, involving a pilot study and main study.

- the second section pertains to the epistemological considerations about the best choice of research method;

- the third section pertains to the methodological considerations about the most appropriate research tools;

- the fourth section pertains to practical matters of sampling and the selection and recruitment of participants;

- the fifth section pertains to considerations of data collection from the perspective of research ethics and research governance;

- the sixth and final section pertains to considerations of the analysis of data and the development of a critical analytical framework.

Based on the conclusions drawn in Chapter 4 and in keeping with the aims of this doctoral research to make a unique and innovative contribution on an empirical, theoretical, methodological and policy level, the proposed research seeks to explore the value of applying critical approaches to discourse analysis to better understanding why ambiguity in regeneration exists and persists. In doing so, what is offered here, is not so much a comprehensive account of post-structural approaches to discourse theory, or indeed of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony, but rather an attempt to examine its utility from a methodological perspective to surface the hidden contradictions which may persist in policy, and how this might serve to negate the outcomes of regeneration.

Methodologically, the chosen approach draws heavily on the work of Howarth (2000) and Torfing (2005) who have discussed in some detail (see Chapter 4), the tendency of discourse theorists in wider social science to critique positivist approaches to discourse whilst continuing to focus on more abstract 'higher level debate' (p321). In expounding some of the issues which arise in this so called, 'methodological deficit', the aim here is to develop a means of applying a critical approach to policy analysis which adheres to the ontological underpinning associated with Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony, but which is in no way is exhaustive of post-structural analyses of discourse or of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) wider work to develop a radical democratic theory of politics.

What follows then, is a discussion about the way in which the planned Doctoral research was designed and undertaken as a result of taking into account some of these ontological, epistemological and methodological challenges laid down by Howarth & Torfing (2005) in an attempt to make sense of ambiguity in regeneration policy from a more critical perspective. Notwithstanding the aims of an interpretive approach, the aim here remains to surface the

'real-world' perspectives of regeneration practitioners engaged in the complex design, delivery and management of regeneration (Diamond & Liddle 2005) albeit from a different (post-structural) ontological perspective.   With this, the discussion now turns to consider the decisions which took place in the early stages of designing the planned programme of Doctoral research, which commenced with a first phase of research from an interpretive perspective and a later second phase based on adopting a more critical perspective.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Drawing on the critique in Chapter 3 based on the limitations of traditional approaches to policy analysis and their tendency towards overly rational attempts at problem-solving (Hill & Hupe 2009, Stone 2002) the first phase of this research focused on operationalising the use of alternative interpretive methods of policy analysis, in an attempt to make sense of the way that actors understood and interpreted ambiguous policy goals and its effects in terms of unintended consequences (see appendix 1 for pilot study report).   With this in mind, early on in this research a small pilot study was designed to test the utility of adopting an alternative 'interpretive approach' to policy analysis by drawing on the work of Yanow (1996, 2000) with the aim of surfacing the implicit assumptions of policy based on how actors 'see and do' policy.   A case study approach was adopted involving 3 cities in a Midlands Region with experience of past industrial decline, and semi-structured interviews with fifteen participants involved in the design, delivery and management of regeneration to see how actors perceived the 'intentions of regeneration' in the context of their daily practice in the same way; whether there were differences in this understanding and the extent to which this caused problems as a result of differences in interpretation (Yanow 1996, 2000).

However, during the analysis of phase 1, despite surfacing four discursive communities, each with their own way of seeing and doing regeneration along with various problems which arose, questions still remained about the reasons *why* such unintended consequences persisted in regeneration policy. In tandem with this, and as a result of presenting this early exploratory work at an ESRC seminar event in Edinburgh to explore the value of interpretive approaches, academic audiences questioned: "you've surfaced differences in seeing and doing and their unintended consequences (which is interesting in its own right) but what does this tell us about the broader reasons about why policy is failing in the first place?" The importance of this early feedback from interpretivist academics chimed with broader criticism in the policy sciences literature about the capacity of idealist/ social constructivist approaches to do little more than describe what actors say and do based on surfacing the symbolic artifacts they displayed (i.e. their language, objects and acts).

Ontologically speaking, this prompted a profound shift in thinking for the second phase of research, to allow for a greater awareness of the social and political context in which regeneration policy operates and consideration of the methodological implications involved. Here, Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony was seen to offer potentially the most comprehensive means of exploring the political context in which policy discourse emerged in the way that it considers; a) the role that 'social antagonisms' play in causing ambiguity; b) how social actors might react to ambiguity as a result of 'political subjectivity'; and c) how particular practices can become 'hegemonic' through attempts to bring together seemingly different positions to form a general 'logics of equivalence'.   Inherent with the decision to undertake a second phase of the research then, was the implied need to explore the broader socio-political context in which policy ambiguity exists in order to explore the

rules which govern discourse, and who and what is ruled in and out. Adopting a more critical approach called for a shift in thinking, ontologically, away from seeking to surface the symbolic elements of discourse (i.e. through what actors said and did) to surfacing the 'unsymbolisable' elements of discourse, based on their constitution in negative terms as 'discursive lack'. For this reason, the design of stage 2 brought with it a need to re-interpret the original research questions though a more critical lens.

As has already been noted, the decision to adopt a more critical approach to policy analysis in the second phase arose out of concern in broader policy science debates pertaining to normative accounts of the apparent shifts that have taken place in patterns of governance away from hierarchical forms of government, towards market based approaches and latterly, a governance approach and the subsequent failure to consider the socio-political context in which decision making takes place Howarth 2000, Howarth & Torfing 2005). Bringing this in line with the broader aims of this thesis, thus implied a need to adopt a more critical approach which seeks to surface not only the linguistic aspects of policy assumptions but to examine their 'discursive' aspects as better means of understanding how the contradictory aspects of discourse come into play (Howarth 2001, Howarth & Torfing 2005).

By tracing the historical development of different approaches to discourse, Chapter 4 showed how it was possible to broadly classify different ontological approaches to discourses in terms of a first, a second and a third generation discourse. First generation discourse ultimately draws on rational-scientific approaches to analysing the structure or the context in which such language might be produced. Second generation discourse emerges in response to a growing need to consider the social and political context in which

language is produced and the types of 'discursive acts' this might in turn lead to. Third generation of discourse, located in the so called 'crisis of Marxism' in which 'structuralist theories of language, culture and society' have been questioned highlights the 'incomplete and contingent' nature of discourse (Howarth 2005, p3). It is in this latter context, that persistent ambiguity has thus far not been explained by either positivist, constructivist, Marxist or realist approaches that this doctoral research emerges.

For instance, drawing broadly on these Marxist, stucturalist and Post-structuralist critiques, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) bring a fundamentally anti-capitalist feel to their work by attempting to show how historically over time, fixed ideas about neo-liberalism have perpetuated the idea that 'Globalisation is inevitable'. According to Laclau & Mouffe (2001) this implies a degree of inevitability to the process which translates into fixed beliefs that all nation-states can do to manage such Globalisation is to work 're-distributively' to ameliorate capitalisms' effects, as is described in the quote below:

> "The usual justification for the 'no alternative dogma' is Globalisation, and the argument generally rehearsed against redistributive social-democratic policies is that the tight fiscal constraints faced by governments are the only realistic possibility in a world where Global markets would not permit any deviation from neoliberal orthodoxy" (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, Pxvi)

Linking this back to the broader aims of this thesis, what Laclau & Mouffe (2001) usefully point out here is that by failing to scrutinize the underpinning assumptions of higher level discourses/ideologies such as neo-liberalism, their effects become hidden and dispersed in the daily practices of actors; which in so doing serves to close off or negate any discussion or

debate about their impact on social life. Hence, by drawing on the important critiques leveled at Marxist and structuralist accounts, what Laclau & Mouffe (2001) begin to highlight is the importance of studying the contingent nature of discourse, and the way in which social reality is interpreted differently depending on the context at the time.

Drawing on post-structuralist notions of 'antagonism', they suggest that ambiguity arises out of this so called 'unfixed' and contingent nature of discourse because it is impossible to 'suture' or fix meaning. This follows that in their critique of contemporary notions of democracy as being based on rational notions of deliberation, there is a need for a more pluralist approach which not only 'take[s] account of the many different voices that a democratic society encompasses' but which also seeks to surface the inherent contradictions and tensions which arise too. However, they are quick to point out that any attempt to do so, is not to reconcile any difference of opinion rather that, such antagonisms are and should always remain a fundamental part of any democratic system:

> "Conflict and division, in our view are neither disturbances that unfortunately cannot be eliminated not empirical impediments that render impossible the full realisation of a harmony that we cannot attain because we will never be able to leave our particularities completely aside in order to act in accordance with our rational self – a harmony which should nonetheless constitute the ideal to which we strive" (Laclau & Mouffe 2011, pxviii)

However, in considering ways of applying such 'third generation discourse', the idea that discourse has its own ontological status has important considerations for the way in which discourse analysis is applied and operationalised both epistemologically and

methodologically. Indeed, in his chapter, *'Applying discourse theory: the method of articulation'*, Howarth (2005, p316) attempts to show how broader debates in the social sciences have largely tended to focus on extremes of either 'higher level abstractions' about the ontological status of discourse (i.e. Marxist, Post-structuralist perspectives) or much 'lower level abstractions' about the capacity of particular methods to confirm or refute certain 'theoretical perspectives' (i.e. new-institutionalist theory, theories of network governance). However, ironically, whilst the former seeks to challenge the implicit assumptions of discourse (whilst offering no means of applying it in practice), the latter (whilst offering a means of methodological application), is also steeped in its own ontological assumptions about what the nature of social reality constitutes.

This, Howarth (2000) has argued, ultimately leads to a 'methodological deficit' in which neither the ontological debates about discourse, nor traditional approaches to methodology, offer an appropriate means for exploring research problems from a critical perspective. In overcoming this, Howarth (2005) draws on Foucault's notion of problematising as a better means of overcoming the implicit assumptions of discourse, because of the way it considers research problems from the perspective of 'what is going on in the world' (p318) rather than to confirm or refute a particular theoretical perspective. In the same way that Foucault sought to explore the impact that historical context had on the way punishment was conceived in 19th century England (see Chapter 4 for fuller discussion), problematisation achieves this by examining the way context shapes what it is possible for actors to say and do:

> "This involves a logic of explanation that brings together and transforms a
> plurality of formal social logics, together with the political logics that constitute

and contest the latter, in order to elucidate a carefully problematised instance of research" (Howarth 2005, p316)

As a means of bridging the methodological deficit which is seen to exist because of an over-focus on higher-level ontological debates, Howarth (2005) highlights the importance of understanding the logic behind different methodological approaches on the basis that without this, it is impossible to examine the rules which govern the practices underpinning discourse (Howarth 2005, p323). He uses the example of the logics of the market is based on a set of rules governing the sellers and the buyers of commodities via a price mechanism in a system of exchange. However, in applying a post-structural approach to discourse analysis, he goes further in making a distinction between the social and the political aspects of any system, on the basis that the social refers to the system of difference created by the system and the political refers to the way in which these systems of difference are responded to in practice.

"instead, socially, these logics are conditional to the historic-political context at the time, hence the logic of bureaucracy, the logic of apartheid etc.; and politically these logics relate to the practices which constitute and contest the social logics" (Howarth 2005, p323).

In order to explain how this important social/ political distinction impacts on methodological concerns going forward, Howarth (2005) applies this notion of logic to notions of hegemony, in which he suggests that it is the response of such groups to their situation in competing for their rights that struggles emerge. Drawing the earlier discussion about hegemony in Chapter 4, what this suggests is that far from policy outcomes being the basis of 'actors

intention' (as with idealist accounts of discourse) or the way that 'society is structured' (as with Marxist accounts of discourse), there is much scope in applying post structural account of discourse analysis in exploring 'what is going on in the world' (Howarth 2005, p318) as he explains in more detail here:

> "This logic is designed to elucidate the practice of constructing political alliances and coalitions between differently positioned social actors. It captures the process by which actors link together a disparate set of particular demands in a common discourse so as to construct a more universal political project" (Howarth 2005, p323)

This suggests that efforts to hegemonise involve actors' attempts to converge on their similar concerns in responding to struggle. To demonstrate, Howarth draws on previous work to analyse the logic of apartheid from this important social and political perspective in which anti-apartheid activists actually managed to re-articulate their concerns by mobilising a black versus non-black campaign in order to garner support from sympathisers from a much wider range of settings (not previously included in the debate). This included black townships, rural institutions and ethnically segregated institutions such as schools and workplaces. This suggests that in contrast to Idealist and Marxist ontological approaches to discourse, the capacity of post-structural approaches to account for the role that the socio-political context plays in shaping what is possible, is unrivalled. It further suggests that in designing research which is epistemologically and methodologically true to a post structural approach, the development of an appropriate theoretical framework is imperative.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Keeping this in mind, the aim of this research is to explore:

1. RQ 1: to what extent are the symbolic aspects of regeneration policy and their unintended consequences representative of the contradictions and tensions identified in Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack?

2. RQ2: To what extent is such lack constitutive of the struggle for hegemony associated with Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony?

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In keeping with the importance described by Howarth (2000) to distinguish methodological concerns from their epistemological underpinnings, a 'problematisation' approach is proposed. Sometimes known as a 'problem driven approach' (p318), this takes as its starting point, not a particular method (i.e. survey research) or the need to confirm a particular theoretical perspective (i.e. realist research), but one which offers a set of tools to analyse 'what is going on in the world' (p318) by examining the rules which structure and 'condition the particular elements of the discourse'. Unlike that of interpretive approaches to discourse analysis then, Howarth (2000) suggests that problematisation approaches allow a 'second level interpretation' to be conducted beyond that of the actors own interpretation, in order for the ontological underpinnings to be assessed using a hermeneutic approach:

> "Researchers use their initially blurred and cloudy understandings as yardsticks to assess the degree to which understanding has been advanced in the process of articulating a new characteristic and theoretical explanation" (Howarth 2000, p320)

A useful insight can be found in a paper by Honan et al (2000) in which data associated with the formation of identity in a 12 year old student called 'Hannah' is presented four different ways using discourse theory, post-structural theory, ethno methodology and conversation

analysis. Based on the four different readings of the same text, they show how different approaches produce 'differently constituted possible worlds' for the development of Hannah's identity (Honan et al 2000, p9).

For instance, whilst the discourse analysis shows the difficulties in making sense of the complexities of Hannah as both the 'model student' in the classroom at the same time as 'acting up' in the playground; a post-structuralist reading seeks out these very tensions, on the basis that discourse is full of such tensions. Meanwhile, an ethno methodological/ conversation analysis reading shows Hannah's 'good student' identity as constructed through the social influences of her teacher based on the moral and social rewards on offer. This fascinating paper not only provides a rigorous account of different approaches to discourse analysis, but also offers us a rare insight, epistemologically into the different types of epistemological data which can be surfaced using different approaches. Based on the methodological deficit described by Howarth (2000) this highlights the importance of applying an appropriate analytical framework in conducting a true critical analysis.

In keeping with the aims of this thesis then, it is suggested that by highlighting the primacy of the 'ontological' in regeneration policy, it will be possible to 'de-construct' existing approaches to discourse to make explicit the underlying assumptions and see how this might limit what it is possible to ask and conclude about the nature of contradictions and tensions which arise in policy. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to examining the extent to which such contradictions and tensions have been surfaced in the broader literature and the degree to which attempts have been made to make explicit it's so called 'ontological character' in terms of the assumptions that are being made.

Unlike other forms of discourse, Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) approach highlights the hidden, empty and absent elements of social reality which they define through the notion of 'lack'. This somewhat 'negative character of ontology' is defined not so much 'what is there' (i.e. the symbolic elements or artifacts of the discourse) as by 'what is not there' or what is absent. In doing so, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) provide an affective account of discourse that is not addressed by other theorists and suggests that analysis should focus on the negativity, gaps, absences or lack and the 'relational links' through which discourses are constituted. This is in contrast to Yanow, which would seek to explore the material elements of practice, recognisable only in their symbolic form (i.e. artifactual language, objects and acts). Instead Laclau & Mouffe (2001) focus on the rules which structure this discursive relationship and serve to give it meaning. As such, they argue that the context in which discourse takes place is paramount since the material aspects of social life are always embedded within a discourse.

Cederstrom & Spicer (2004) offer an innovative means of operationalising this process of articulation by showing how culturally, things are perceived differently at different times and place. For instance a museum in Europe could represent high culture in a European context whilst in the Middle East it could easily represent western domination. It is in this 'unfixed' but rather contextual nature that they suggest that it is impossible to fix any particular meaning around any one discourse. Unlike Yanow then, it is inherent within this unfixed and context specific nature of discourse that Cedarstrom and Spicer (2004) suggest that the 'real' emerges and that symbolic artifacts such language, objects and acts only capture a reflection of practice at certain 'point in time and space'.

Instead Laclau & Mouffe (2001) suggest that discourse has a more negative content, constituting a range of possible meanings which stretch from 'something more' (i.e. a vast array of concepts) to something less (i.e. a disarray of unlinked concepts). Rather, it is in this process of brokering between different concepts that meaning is actually assigned, and further it is through attempts to find the 'relational links' between these concepts that the notion of ambiguity appears as an 'elusive form of rationality' (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, p93). Laclau & Mouffe's theory of hegemony then is about exploring the non-rational aspects of policy, and the rules which structure this relationship of relational links which serve to give it meaning. Such critical approaches are particularly relevant in the context of research such as this, which is steeped in ambiguity and complexity and offers a means by which regeneration policy is experienced in the field.

SURFACING LACK THROUGH NODAL POINTS AND FLOATING SIGNIFIERS

On the basis that it is in this failure to 'pin-down' a concrete definition where the 'real' social object emerges in the form of lack, it is possible to look for these multiple meanings or dualisms in the texts and narratives of actors where contradictions and tensions seem to emerge in the temporary meaning that's assigned. In Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of hegemony, 'nodal points' are said to offer a degree of stability amidst such lack, by offering actors a way of 'believing something which may not actually be possible'. Because of the inherent contradiction, nodal points are held together by an array of 'floating signifiers' which serve to give the discourse meaning. Cederstrom & Spicer (2004) suggest that in searching for such lack then, there is a need to look for inherent tensions and contradictions in the narrative by asking:

- Where is the lack in this discourse? (Where are there tensions and contradictions expressed?)

- Where do stakeholders assign multiple meanings?

- Which signifier acts as a nodal point (What key words are used as a 'supreme justification' for the way things work in the field?

- Which groups attach different signifiers at different times? (Cederstrom and Spicer 2004)

SURFACING FANTASY THROUGH THE AFFECTIVE REALM

In keeping with the undecidability of discourse, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) go on to show how nodal points serve the purpose of 'temporarily structuring' discourse by giving it a degree of 'form' (Cederstrom & Spicer 2004). But there is also a sense of what drives and sustains discourses through the emotional attachment that actors might assign to these different meanings. In exploring the role of the affective, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) draw from French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan to explain why different stakeholders have an affinity to some nodal points over and above others, and suggest that this is manifested through the concepts; objects of desire, jouissance and fantasy. Here, whilst the notion of objet petit à refers to a future desired state symbolized through an object, the notion of jouissance refers to the expected reward from ones struggle for desire. Both notions of objet petit and jouissance are brought together in the prospect of fantasy through an idealised (but impossible to attain) future goal. Based on Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of discursive lack, such Lacanian concepts deem to suggest how actors might wish for an idealised future, enjoying the pleasure and pain of its possibility through jouissance, but remain distant from

attaining a goal because of its ultimate impossibility or inherent lack. Theoretically then, we can also ask:

- What object is the source of emotional investment?

- What reward is expected to be gained?

- By what imagined ideal?

RESEARCH TOOLS

A case study approach offered possibly the greatest means of gaining access to some of the complex processes bound up in regeneration policy (Yin 1994). Despite the potential for its 'exploratory, explanatory and descriptive' purpose, when coupled with the 'richness' of a theoretical framework, a case study approach offered an unrivalled means of surfacing some of the complexities that actors might experience in their daily practice. This, together with the systematic recording of sources of data during the data collection period ensured that multiple sources of data could be collected at each site, including observation, interviews and documentary analysis in order to build up a rich picture of the context in which the 'situated talk' of actors could be studied. In the study, the selection of one of the nine administrative UK regions as a case study stems from its capacity to provide a sufficiently large and bounded site for the study of ambiguity in regeneration policy outcomes, at the same time as ensuring relative ease of access to agencies which covered around 10% of the UK population. Such regions were renowned for their longstanding experience of economic recession not least owing to the recent economic downturn in some regions as a result of the decline in local steel and manufacturing industries and the associated job losses. The region in question is characterised by relatively urban

conurbations (50%) with the other half consisting of rural areas and in terms of deprivation and (at the time of the research) was in receipt of several major government funds associated with under 2 million in NRF allocation and nearly £1 million in European Funds (including European Regional Development Find (ERDF) or Objective 1 as it was known; and European Social Fund (ESF) or Objective 2 as it was known). At the time of press and since the time of undertaking this research, this funding has since ceased in line with the accession of poorer EU member state that have a lesser contribution to GDP.

CASE STUDY APPROACH

The decision to adopt a discourse analytic approach implied the need to study practitioners' interpretations of regeneration policy and its capacity to tackle deprivation. This implied a need to clarify not only what was meant by the term 'practitioner'; 'regeneration' and 'policy failure'; but also how best to gain access from the field in order to gather data for the research. A case study approach offered the best means of exploring the context of geographical urban areas experiencing deprivation, in addition to accessing suitable 'research participants' involved directly in the delivery of such 'in-situ' regeneration. The selection of such a case study area hinged on the need to identify a) a government body with a defined policy brief to tackle the 'urban problem' b) a geographical area which has experience of the 'urban problem' c) and a wide range of actors seeking to 'implement policy' in order to tackle the urban problem. This implied that the selection of any case study site should meet the following criteria:-

- Enable the study of a defined 'regeneration policy brief' stating intentions to tackle
  deprivation, poverty and inequality (such as Neighbourhood Renewal (NR),
  Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Economic Development (ED)

- Offer access to a broad geographical area which has experienced a significant degree of post-war industrial decline leading to a reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (i.e. such as that referred to in European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or European Social Fund (ESF) criteria in order to increase regional competitiveness)

- Offer access to smaller geographical areas which are classified as deprived by hosting a significant number of 10-20% of the 88 most deprived Local Authority Wards (i.e. according to the Indices for Multiple Deprivation i.e. NRF areas)

- Offer access to a wide range of 'regeneration vehicles' (such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's), New Deal for Communities (NDC); Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP); Local Area Agreements (LAA) which state an intention to tackle deprivation)

- Offer access to a wide range of 'regeneration actors' with experience of 'policy implementation' on the basis that they may have 'different perspectives about the way that regeneration policy is delivered and the impact it has (i.e. policy makers, civil servants, policy analysts, policy managers, front-line staff).

RATIONALE FOR SELECTING A REGION AS A CASE STUDY

The *Sustainable Community Strategy* (ODPM 2003) notes the increasing importance of regions in policy decision making surrounding planning, transport regeneration policy (ODPM 2005). From a sampling perspective then, regions offered relative ease of access to a wide range of actors involved in the design, implementation and evaluation (monitoring) of major policy portfolios such as sustainable communities policy, economic development policy and neighbourhood renewal policy. These included government bodies such as

Government Offices (GO) which, at the time of writing had devolved policy decision making from Whitehall and had a range of actors from which to sample including directors of services and policy advisors; Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) which following the Sub National Review (CLG/ BERR 2008), had significant decision making capacity not only surrounding regeneration policy and strategy, but also around the financial decision making too; Regional Assemblies (RA's) in their broader governance capacity to oversee the decisions of the RDA; and the various Regional Voluntary Sector Networks (RSVN) which at the time of writing had a strategic role in representing the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in government policy:

The selection of a Midlands region as a case study stemmed partly from the need to be realistic about the travel/ time constraints involved in collecting a large volume of data for the purposes of this PhD thesis along with recent experience of using a neighbouring Midlands region in the initial pilot study. Hence, the West Midlands region offered a sufficiently large and accessible case study area for the purposes of this research with a population of more than 5.27 million (9% of the UK total). In addition, a Midlands region also offered a wealth of experience in undergoing economic change, not least owing to the recent economic downturn, but also from its experience as host to a large manufacturing industry (which up until recently, accounted for 20.4% of all regional employment). The service sector accounts for much of the remaining employment providing up to 70% of the regions jobs.

Such a region was characterised by mainly urban conurbations (50%) with the other half consisting of rural areas and in terms of deprivation, hosted some seven of the Governments' Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) allocations which constituted some 10-

20% of the 88 most deprived local authority areas, of which Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton as the largest cities with others including Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Stoke on Trent.   As a result, in 2006/8 these areas qualified for £145 million of NRF allocation and £954 million of European Funds (of which £525 million was from ERDF Objective 2 funding; £90 million ESF Objective 2 and £339 million of ESF Objective 3 funding (http://www.gos.gov.uk/gowm). This focus on a city context was particularly important given the known concentrations of deprivation in cities:

> "The evidence shows that the most deprived areas are mainly concentrated in large cities, including London, as well as in some other urban areas in the North and Midlands (Turok & Webster 1998 –cited in Kleinman and Whitehead 1999 p80).

In view of the criteria to study the urban problem in the context of industrial decline, a decision was taken to study three cities within this conurbation in an attempt to provide a detailed analysis of the factors which might contribute to ambiguity in policy and the ways in which actors might negotiate and manage these. Although there was sufficient scope within the confines of this programme of doctoral research to cover a relatively large sample, a decision was taken to undertake no more than fifty interviews with actors involved in the design, delivery and management of regeneration on the basis that this would allow for greater in depth analysis with the aim of surfacing contradictions and tensions that emerged in the course of their daily practice. Although covering all seven of the NRF areas might have improved the generalisability of the study across an entire region, it would also have undoubtedly proven unwieldy, requiring the sample to be spread across a wide geographical area. This need to balance the need for breadth as well as depth led to the decision to select just three out of the possible seven Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in

a Midland region with the aim of performing a more detailed analysis of the key regeneration vehicles and key actors within that geographical area.

In selecting an appropriate research tool for data collection, the method of interviewing was deemed most appropriate for eliciting the richness of data required to undertake discourse analysis. The utility of interviews in providing access to actors' beliefs, knowledge and attitudes is well documented (Williams and May 1996). However they also provide a basis from which to explore the lived experience of actors (Yanow 1996). Pawson and Tilley (2004) advocate less structured interviews as having a stronger basis for understanding the reasoning behind actors' decisions, but a semi-structured design would also ensure that responses could be restricted to the topic of enquiry. With this in mind, interview questions were designed to highlight participants' understanding of the practices and techniques adopted in undertaking regeneration activity (See Appendix 2 for interview schedule). In overcoming the problem of response bias, reassurances were given that the interview was confidential and in no way implied any right or wrong answers. Rather reassurance was given that what the research was particularly interested in was in surfacing the different ways in which actors understood the goals of regeneration and the tensions that arose in terms of their experience of what worked and what didn't work. Interviews were conducted in a private room based at participants own place of work, and this was important in providing a relaxed environment in which participants felt able to share thoughts freely and privately. To ensure the accurate recording of responses, interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder along with observational notes and with the permission of participants, these interview audio-files were fully transcribed for later analysis. In keeping with the suggestion by Yin (1994) to triangulate data in many forms, documentary evidence

was collected from each site at both a regional and city level. This typically included strategic planning documents, scoping and feasibility studies for market analysis, delivery plans, marketing material for potential investors and community newsletters. At a community level these typically included action plans, community/ neighbourhood newsletters and theme briefings, as can be seen in Table 5 below.

Regional Agencies	Academy Business Plan
	Strategic Framework
	Regional Housing Action Plan
City Agencies	Strategic Development Plans
	Economic Strategies
	Market Activity Reports
	Growth Strategies
	Area Investment Prospectuses
	Community Newsletters
	Sustainable Community Strategies
	Housing Market Analyses
	LAA Cross cutting delivery plans
Neighbourhood Agencies	Community Strategies (
	Theme briefings – i.e. health/ community safety(NDC)
	Annual Reports
	Community Newsletter
	Neighbourhood Newsletter

TABLE 5: SHOWING RANGE OF DOCUMENTS SOURCED BY TYPE OF AGENCY

RECRUITMENT OF SAMPLE

The selection and recruitment of suitable participants involved those staff involved in the design, delivery and management of regeneration with the aim of surfacing actors assumptions about the meaning of regeneration policy and the challenges experienced in delivery (See Table 6 for a summary of the types of stakeholders recruited and their institutional context). A case study approach was used to sample some fifty regeneration practitioners using a snowballing technique based on recruiting lead contacts in three cities in a Midlands region in receipt of major Regeneration funding (ESRC or NRF) based on their

past experience of economic decline. Following initial meetings with each lead contact to ascertain the local context, actors were recruited with the help of the lead contact, via email and telephone and invited to take part in an interview of between forty-five and sixty minutes duration about their experiences of delivering regeneration. Typically actors had a wide range of experience (one year to twenty years) of the design, delivery and management of regeneration across a range of government-led programmes including Neighbourhood Renewal, Economic Development and Urban Renaissance (including Sustainable Communities' Strategy) and operated at a number of spatial levels including a regional, district and local neighbourhood level.

In line with the advice of Yanow (1996, 2000) stakeholders were drawn from a range of policy, agency and community backgrounds to ensure a good spread of opinion. In her study of the meaning of Israeli community centres, Yanow (1996) discusses the practical aspects of gaining access to a wide range of actors in providing a full range of perspectives (or interpretations) of the issue under study. Yanow interviewed actors at a range of policy, agency and community levels, including 9 directors, 6 supervisors, 5 committee members, 15 community workers, and 1 journalist from a local newspaper, to get a media perspective of the issue. In the context of my research, this implied a need to access a wide range of actors at different levels of national and regional policy, which included staff working at a regional level within Government Office, directors and managers of regeneration strategy within Regeneration Departments (Such as Economic Development and Neighbourhood Renewal) and associated partnership structures (such as Local Strategic Partnerships); and community level actors within Area Based Initiatives (ABI's) to include managers of services, practitioners, and community workers. The decision not to include community members

was premised on the research design to explore the challenges involved in the design, management and delivery of regeneration, rather than the impact on end recipients, but could form the basis of future research. To assist in building credibility amongst actors locally, in addition to ensuring local 'politically awareness' in terms political leadership etc; prior to 'formally' entering the field, three 'practitioner guides' were selected within each case study area to assist with the identification of contacts and provide some background information on the political climate within each area.   Guides included a Neighbourhood Manager in one city; an Economic Development Officer in another city and a Policy Manager in the final city.

ANALYSIS

Following the transcribing in full of all fifty interviews, analysis began by reading around twenty percent of the interview transcripts and attempting to summarise what participants had said. This was done during analysis through a process of initial coding, in which attempts were made to summarise the data in terms of looking for 'commonly occurring themes'.   Unlike thematic analysis however, discourse analysis doesn't seek to use categories and codes, but rather look for a storyline or narrative across different groups sharing similar values.

Hence ultimately, what was required here, were potential differences in meaning across the different discourses which may relate to the same topic, but seemingly hold a different meaning.   Eventually the codes came to form familiar patterns of narrative, (as Dryzek (1993) describes in terms of discourses having similar ontology's, beliefs and practices).

Regional Body
Government Offices for Regions
Regional Centre of Excellence
Homes and Communities Agency
City Agencies
District/ City Councils
Economic Development
Planning
Community Involvement Networks
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
Urban Regeneration Company (URC)
Strategic Partnerships
Economic Partnerships (i.e. Urban Village/ Technology Parks)
Neighbourhood Agencies
Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP)
New Deal for Communities (NDC)
Community Networks
VCS Providers

TABLE 6: SHOWING TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER SAMPLED AND THEIR INTSITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Once a pattern had emerged in which it was possible to 'group' similar codes together, I began separating the codes into 'groups of discursive communities' to see if they looked feasible from what I'd found so far. Similar to the process used in the pilot study when I was looking for difference between Yanow's (1996, 2000) policy communities.

In searching for notions of lack, there was a need to identify where contradictions might have occurred in the narrative – where at the same time discussion what works, actors also seemingly discussed what did not work. This was achieved by…. In searching for the emotional investment that stakeholders might make, it was important to look for language which identified, passion, or where energy had been invested. For instance in DS08 energy was seemingly invested in making the area as attractive to the private sector as possible

through removing barriers to trade and improving efforts to retain existing businesses, despite the frustrations this brought:

> "The whole thing about it is...if you make the conditions as such that firms want to relocate there because you have an offer that is, acceptable to any, so you make the area attractive, you've made your population attractive in terms of skills attractive to...would be employers. You've got to be able to say to people, come here because..." (DS08, 297)

This was backed up observationally during field visits where the researcher collated scores of marketing material/ brochures promoting the wide range of sites available across the city for potential development, most of which were ex-industrial sites and with few school playing fields. Further detailed analysis began with:

1) An attempt to code general responses on screen using the 'review' and 'comments' function in Microsoft word;

2) Aligning any comments or phrases which appeared to hold a similar meaning by assigning a 'key phrase';

3) Cutting and pasting these key phrases into separate documents (along with their reference and location in text); and

4) Individually interpreting each document for possible storylines.

In keeping with a critical approach, the different discourses were seen to emerge where actors made repeated reference to key terms such as 'narrowing the gap' or 'city regions' (nodal points) and reference to similar processes in terms of inward investment or learning and skills (floating signifiers). Inherent contradictions emerged as a result of trying to make

sense of the seemingly impossible 'internal logics' of each discourse, where for instance, actors appeared to committed to a particular discourse (i.e. 'growth through city regions) at the same time as expressing concern about its potential failure (i.e. lack of growth due to recession or lack of 'real jobs').

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Looking at the historical practice surrounding past ethical conduct reminds us of the need to consider the ethical implications of our research practice at every stage of the research process and its potential impact on participants, from constructing the research problem (and developing RQ) right through to designing the research, collecting data, analyzing the findings and presenting the data for dissemination. Such considerations are not only premised on the need to ask a few basic questions about the process one will be adopting in order to collect, store and share data, but also include much grander questions about beneficence (how actors will benefit from taking part in the research); respect (how informed consent will be obtained and managed) and justice (how actors will ultimately be represented in the research). In terms of beneficence, the benefits of taking part in the study rest upon practitioners desire to improve the effectiveness of regeneration outcomes for population health and increasing actors' knowledge of the urban problem. In the research, significant steps were taken to ensure that actors understand their contribution to the research by detailing the nature of the research problem through circulating a comprehensive background paper (see Appendix 4) during the recruitment phase. This proved extremely valuable in building researcher credibility and reassuring participants of what was involved in taking part. Confidentiality was assured both during the recruitment phase, as well as prior to the commencement of any interviews.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH AND KEY FINDINGS

As has been described earlier, the first phase of data collection sought to ascertain and pilot the merits of adopting an interpretive theoretical framework to an area of regeneration known to produce symbolic policy; that was housing-led-regeneration, by asking; who are the policy communities?; how do they understand the debate?; where do differences in interpretation cause problems? (See Appendix 1 for pilot study). Findings showed that there were indeed four different policy communities, each with their own ways of seeing and doing. This manifested itself through actors' different use of language, policy objects and acts to describe the goals of regeneration.   As a pilot study, stage 1 proved useful in exploring an area of regeneration whose outcomes were known to be steeped in ambiguity and allowed. In addition, prior to feedback at the ESCR *'policy as practice'* event, it also offered a potential means of testing the utility of an interpretivist approach to policy analysis as a means of explain the existence and persistence of ambiguity in regeneration policy. However, despite having surfaced differences in the symbolic artifacts used by actors in the delivery of housing-led-regeneration, questions still remained about; a) why does such ambiguity persist?; and b) how do actors deal with such ambiguity in the course of their daily practice?

In adopting a more critical approach implied a need to explore the role that power played in regeneration and the way that discourses might be privileged. As already has been discussed (see methodology), this required an approach which could surface not only the

multiple discourses which might be present and any problems that might be caused as a result of differences in understanding (as with an interpretive approach) but which was able to offer a critical perspective about why those problems might be present in the first place. As has already been noted (see Methodology), Laclau & Mouffe (2001) notion of discourse shows how the presence of such contradictions and tensions within discourse are a reflection of the negative and unfixed nature of discourse rooted in hegemonic lack. With this in mind, an attempt was made to re-articulate the original research questions from an interpretive framework towards a critical understanding based on adopting a Laclavian approach. This was done with the intention of exploring, not just how actors understood the debate, but *why* the debate was so complicated and how indeed actors dealt with and managed some of these inherent dilemmas affectively.

A critical re-reading of the original research questions suggested that instead of asking 'who are the policy communities' and 'how do they understand the debate?', there was a need to consider 'to what extent is the ambiguity inherent within paradox constituted as lack?'. Similarly, instead of asking 'where do differences cause problems? it was more important to consider; 'the extent to which such lack constituted hegemony? In operationalising this approach, and drawing on the work of Cederstrom and Spicer (2004), an analytical framework was developed to explore; 'where is the lack in this discourse? (where are there contradictions expressed?) Which signifier acts as a nodal point? (which keywords are used?); what object is the source of emotional investment? (in terms of romantic ideals?); what reward is expected to be gained? (investment in policy rituals); by what imagined ideal? (where is there evidence of nostalgia?).

The key in conducting such a critical analysis is not only in surfacing the assumptions in both official discourse (in terms of policy documents) and actors unofficial discourse (in terms if their experience), but also to identify and flag up areas where there are contradictory practices at play, in terms of issues which serve to negate the outcomes of regeneration from being met. This is what Laclau & Mouffe (2001) refer to in terms of the inherent contradictions and tensions in discourse and it is these which contribute to the notion of discursive lack, because the investment made in a particular way of seeing and doing is inherently flawed.

According to Cederstrom and Spicer (2007), the way that 'a nodal point creates unity amongst other signifiers' (i.e. through floating signifiers) merely describes the form of discourse but it tells us little about 'the force that drives a discourse to be used and sustained' (p10). In other words whilst exposing the nodal points and floating signifiers (or form) of a discourse can tell us about the constitutive nature of that discourse (its programme logic if you like) through exploring the affective realm of the discourse too, it is possible to examine why a discourse might appeal to some and not others. As we have seen before, drawing on Lacan's psychoanalytical concepts, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) present three types of emotional investment. Objet petit a, describes our ultimate *'object of desire'* and is reflected in debates which draw on romantic notions of success. Put simply, what one might call a person who appears to be wearing 'rose-tinted spectacles'. Jouissance, on the other hand denotes the reason or *'expected reward'* for struggle and in so doing highlights the 'pleasure/ pain' principle one might experience in pursuit of one's goals. According to Cederstrom and Spicer (2004) fantasy results from attempts to square or overcome the dissonance which arises out of a failure to achieve ones ultimate object of desire. In this

sense, fantasmic scenarios assist in the pursuit of one's object of desire by helping to 'articulate its goals and aspirations' (p12). Based on examining the so called 'force' of discourse, it is possible to ascertain what drives and maintains interest in a particular way of seeing and doing regeneration despite its apparent failure to achieve outcomes, as evidenced in the presence of lack.

What now follows is a brief overview of the three rival discourses which emerged from the empirical data, along with a summary of the nodal points and signifiers which gave each discourse its form, and the affective response which gave each discourse its force. In each case, a summary is provided of the nature of each discursive formation using material from the interview data. The aim of this overview chapter (Chapter 6) is to provide an introduction to the nature of each discourse prior to a more in depth analysis of both the form of each discourse in terms of the nodal points and floating signifiers and the force of the discourse in terms of the emotional investment made by actors in each case. With this, Chapters 7 describes the first discourse; City Regions; Chapter 8 describes the second discourse entitled; Narrowing the gap, and Chapter 9 describes the third discourse entitled; Community Capacity Building.

Discourse 1: Increasing economic opportunity through city regions

The first discursive formation can be seen in terms of tackling economic disadvantage through attempts to build competitive 'city regions' (nodal point) through inward investment in an attempt to enhance the offer (floating signifier); training and skills to build aspiration (floating signifier) and build entrepreneurial communities to build economic opportunity (floating signifier). However, discursive lack could be witnessed in the form of contradictions and tensions which arose; including a lack of economic growth due to

recession (contradiction 1); a lack of real jobs due to a local skills mismatch (contradiction 2) and a failure to generate entrepreneurial communities due to a lack of economic opportunity (contradiction 3). In surfacing the force behind this discourse, as an object of desire, actors invested in attempts to raise the aspirations of young people who they saw as being 'trapped in a cycle of poverty' because of generations of unemployment (Objet petit a). Jouissance emerged in the form of complaints about the bureaucratic nature of public sector organisations (jouissance). One Director of Regeneration noted a clash of values between the private and public sector in terms of the pace of change and the delays this cause in terms of planning, as a result of waiting draw down funds (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – sitting around in deckchairs DS 30). Fantasy arose through a nostalgic belief that despite the difficulties associated with wealth creation, it was still possible to connect up the global with the local.

Nodal Point	City regions	"Quote from text"
Floating signifiers	Enhancing the offer through investment	"if you make the conditions as such that firms want to relocate there because you have an offer that's acceptable to any, you make the area attractive [and you've made the population attractive in terms of skills to would be employers" DS1, 297)
	Investing in learning and skills	"what we want to offer is prolonged enterprise training to help people to train to start up their own businesses" (DS14, 46)
	Increasing economic opportunities	"You have to give the opportunity for people to improve their economic prospects in order for them to take advantage of things on offer" (DS72)
Tensions and contradictions	Lack of investment due to recession	"It's going to take longer than we thought…we've got all the plans…but it's just that we've got to get some private money to develop it, and that's taking more time…if the credit crunch had been a little bit later, we would have been up and running". (DS19, 286)
	Lack of 'real jobs' due to skills mismatch	"Those who have very little skills…are the hardest to reach… the lowest levels of skills are the hardest to help and one would say that it's those who…have benefitted least on the basis that what is being created in this modern economy are not jobs that require no skills" (DS1,122)

	Lack of entrepreneurism in communities	"[the area] where it didn't work, you had nothing to begin with. You had a very stressed community, a lot of issues around settled travelling communities…basically, the community with the greatest need was actually the one that was least able to take [advantage] of the opportunities" (DS4, 105) Elected Member
Object petit a	Tackling a cycle of poverty	"Because they [people] come from certain areas – they're not judged as being able to aspire. They're turned off from education, they don't get a job, if they do it's at the end of the scale…they're unskilled [and] get minimum wages" (DS19, 79)
Jouissance	Central government interference	"The local authority is such a bureaucratic organisation. I mean for instance, this building has got 24 reception points! The bloke who turns up at the counter – just comes in on a whim and decides he wants to invest 50 million pound in the city - what chance has he got of getting through all that bureaucracy?" (DS3, 155)
Fantasy	Connecting up the global with the local	"The amount of international companies is very limited, even the amounts of big companies are very limited, actually the growth tends to come from a very small area. I'd be very surprised if many companies relocate to [city] outside of a 25 mile radius" (DS1, 315)

TABLE 7: CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS OF CITY REGIONS

DISCOURSE 2: NARROWING THE GAP THROUGH SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The second discourse then can be described in terms of a public services (or welfare) discourse in which deprivation was perceived in terms of tackling inequalities in access to service provision though attempts to 'narrow the gap' (nodal point) in life expectancy and quality of life. Here, regeneration was seen to offer a means of improving service provision through securing resources for public investment (floating signifier); community involvement and performing needs assessment (floating signifier) as a means of demonstrating public accountability (floating signifier). However, contradictions and tensions emerged in the form of a lack of strategy associated with a failure to co-ordinate service provision leading to the duplication of efforts and the wasting of resources (contradiction 1); a lack of community involvement in shaping service delivery (contradiction 2) and a failure to communicate the benefits of improvements to service provision in terms of democratic accountability (contradiction 3). In managing such tensions, there are a

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romantic notions here of the need to demonstrate financial probity to government. In talk, actors frequently referred to the importance of 'lines of accountability' to Central and Regional Government departments and the Local Authority as accountable body which seemed to be rooted in a desire to demonstrate success to the electorate. In terms of Jouissance, actors frequently talked about the 'pain' of ongoing competition to secure resources from central government in tandem with the 'pleasure' of successful bids. Here, success was seen in terms of 'getting large chunks of money onto the estate' even though in reality this often only represented a fraction of mainstream spending. At the heart of the fantasmic elements of this discourse was an irrational belief that despite the difficulties associated with a lack of strategy; a lack of community involvement and a failure to communicate new services coming on stream, better brokering between service providers would overcome difficulties. Emotionally, actors in this discourse saw themselves at the coalface with the capacity to offer practical help to improve joint working between partners.

Nodal Point	Narrowing the Gap	"we talk about regeneration policy, about working with our partners in the local authority, the PCT, the police and others, about how they're delivering their services in the area – in a way that helps to narrow the gap that I've talked about" (DS11, 68)
Floating signifiers	Service improvement	"in terms of new services coming in, that showed a great potential in answering a number of the deprivation indices that are exhibited here" (DS17, 114)
	Community involvement in service design	"it's about making the right interventions in the right way…you're never going to get it 100% right but you can through a combination of interpreting data, reading signals on the ground…have a strategic overview at a city level" (DS39, 209)
	Public accountability	"Most of what we do that works is about sitting down with people and…exploring with them what works for them" (DS 11)
Tensions and contradictions	Lack of strategy leading to duplication	"I am surprised by that lack of coordination of those services going in, talking to each other and that lack of overview and strategic plan of how you're going to maximise those training and learning opportunities

	Lack of community involvement in shaping service delivery	"There was a pressure to spend money at the beginning and come up with a programme quite quickly and clearly, if it's going to be community led, it takes time to gather the evidence that you need to ensure that what you're going to spend is what the community needs" (DS11, 253)
	Lack of communication and democratic accountability	Outside of what we're instigating here, there is not a newsletter that goes to every household, there's no level of communication to jo public who lives in the surrounding district" (DS17, 323)
Object petit a	Demonstrating public accountability	"I couldn't run and hide when Longbridge broke – it would have been a fundamental rejection about what we are about. It's the same with LDV – we're mitigating the social impacts of closure through advice and community involvement" (DS39, 39)
Jouissance	Competition for resources	"it [the programme] spent its first two years arguing about who should be on the board, who should make decisions [and] who should get the money…"(DS11, 121)
Fantasy	Brokering for better joined up working	"It's about the connectivity there and neighbourhood management…we're getting more sophisticated about how we do things" (DS39, 396)

TABLE 8: CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS OF NARROWING THE GAP

DISCOURSE 3: BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The third discourse can be seen in terms of a social enterprise in which actors placed a high value on adopting a needs-led approach to securing resources for communities. Here the urban problem was seen in terms of a failure to meet community needs through existing service provision, invoking a storyline about the requirement for development work to build community capacity (NP). Regeneration was seen in terms of understanding of the needs of deprived groups (FS) using networking to develop creative approaches to responding to need (FS) and securing suitable funding in the form of grants in order to plug gaps in service provision (FS). However, contradictions and tensions emerged in the form of a lack of autonomy to make decisions about the nature of development work because of the statutory requirements of partner organisations (C1); a perceived lack of trust by other partners to respond to community needs creatively (C2); and a lack of sustainable funding to

co-ordinate and maintain a flexible response to community need because of short-term funding regimes (C3). From the perspective of emotional investment, the force of discourse is bound up in actors' romantic notions that the only way to increase their role in service provision was through educating the statutory sector about their unique way of operating and inherent value base. Here there was a sense that the statutory didn't understand the nature of third sector business (DS48, 646); or what social enterprise was (DS42, 768).   In terms of jouissance, again the force of discourse is revealed through repeated complaints about the lack of rigour in the government's monitoring of performance related targets. This was typified in frequent examples of national training providers who had been awarded government contracts (in preference to VCS providers) to supply job skills training but who were perceived to be 'robbing the system' (DS42, 919) by 'double counting' the numbers of people involved when their 'output' had been recorded elsewhere. There was also talk here of gaming, whereby one national provider was perceived to be placing clients in temporary jobs internally on a minimum wage, just to achieve government targets in order that funds could be drawn down (DS42, 909). In spite of the difficulty, there was a sense that if long terms sustainability could be built, the sector could be more self sufficient in tackling inequality, by generating businesses that would last (DS48, :

Nodal Point	Building community capacity	Quotes
Floating signifiers	Building community networks	"we created these networks that cover the whole of the city…there are 90 membership groups and they can vary from an allotment society to social enterprise, and RSL or training companies" (DS35, 277)
	Securing grant funding	"There was a hardware store full of pigeons but I needed accommodation myself, admin staff, communities to engage with the workers, so we used SRB funding to renovate the upstairs" (DS48, 23)
	Plugging gaps in service provision	"I guess the services we provide are the services that are needed and they aren't mainstream like other providers" (DS16, 16)
Tensions and	Lack of autonomy	"everything had to go through those area managers and then

contradictions		when the NDCs came that was the same (DS48, 494)
	Lack of funding	"There's no funding for what we do…none at all. All our jobs end in March…but it's been like that for 19 years" (DS42, 446)
	Lack of trust	"The organisation applied for some SRB monies and put together a comprehensive programme [but] the local authority said 'we don't want a VCS group running it' (DS48, 12)
Object petit a	Educating other sectors	"Those economic papers [from the Regional Development Agency] don't come down to this level" (DS48, 584)
Jouissance	Competing with other sectors	"There's so many people [providers] robbing the system and there's so many fiddle[s] going on" (DS42, 909)
Fantasy	Building sustainability through social enterprise	"We've got to be clear about who are the right people, that can generate businesses that are going to employ our youth and it may be that those are community based things which have got some sustainability in terms of need" (DS48, 624)

TABLE 9: CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS OF BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Having provided an overview of the three main discourses to emerge from analysis (see Table 10 for comparison between the discourses), the discussion now turns to a detailed analysis of each in terms of the form (i.e. nodal points and floating signifiers) and force (emotional investment). This is presented in the next three chapters, 7, 8 and 9. Here an attempt is made to present a simplified storyline through an overarching nodal point but at the same time focusing on highlighting the different floating signifiers contained within it, which served to give the discourse its meaning. In keeping with a critical approach, discursive lack is then highlighted by surfacing the inherent contradiction and tensions which co-existed within each narrative. In this way, an attempt is made to try and show how meaning is constructed in a relational way through attempts to link the different signifiers into a shared meaning, but that this is not fixed because of the inherent contradictions which exist. In the context of broader critical approaches to surface the hegemonic nature of discourse, the discussion which follows n chapter 10, tries to make sense of the meaning of surfacing such discursive lack in regeneration policy, and considers the likely implications for future policy to tackle deprivation.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS

DISCOURSE 1: CITY REGIONS - TACKLING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY THROUGH GROWTH

From the analysis of interviews with over 50 stakeholders, around eighteen actors could be said to ascribe to a 'city regions' discourse in which the urban problem was seen in terms of economic decline rooted in industrial decline and job loss and solutions rested in stimulating economic growth through competition, based on generating inward investment (floating signifier); education and skills in an attempt to raise aspiration (floating signifier) and building entrepreneurial communities to build economic opportunity (floating signifier). However, in keeping with a critical approach, inherent contradictions emerged *within* the narratives in the form of a lack of investment due to recession (contradiction 1); a lack of 'real jobs' due to a skills mismatch (contradiction 2) and a failure to generate entrepreneurial communities because of the inability of 'stressed communities' to take advantage of the opportunities on offer (contradiction 3) (See figure 3).

City Regions: Growth
- Inward investment
- Learning and skills
- Increasing access to economic Opportunity

Lack of growth
- Lack of investment
- Lack of 'real jobs' due to skills mismatch
- Lack of entrepreneurial communities
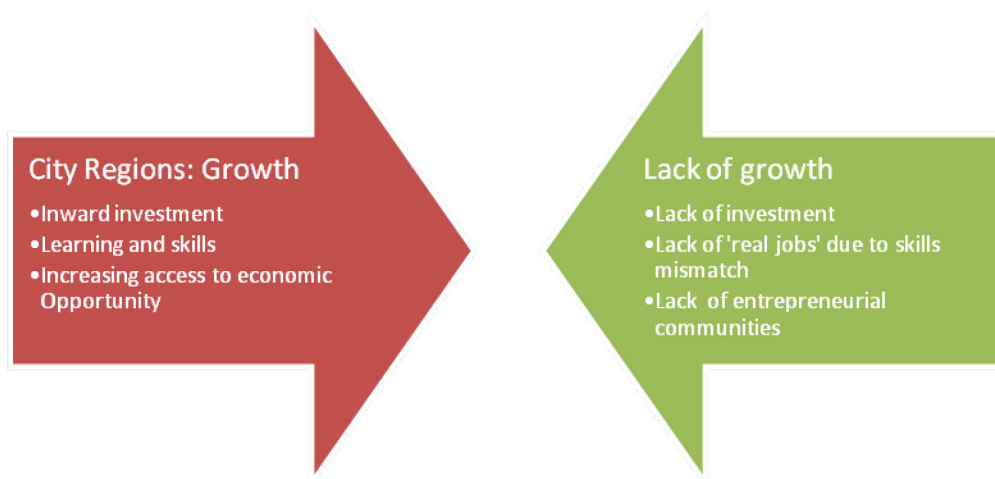
FIGURE 3: SHOWING DISCURSIVE LACK IN ATTEMPTS TO BUILD COMPETITIVE CITY REGIONS

Each of these discursive formations will now each be discussed in turn, drawing evidence from both interview data with actors involved in the design, strategic management and delivery of regeneration as well as documentary analysis of regional and local reports. In doing so, an attempt is made to support the notion of discursive lack in the context of a city region acting as a nodal point supported by several floating signifiers; inward investment; education and skills; and economic opportunity on the basis that contradictions emerged which had the potential to negate outcomes; including economic slowdown due to recession (contradiction 1); lack of 'real jobs' due to skills mismatch (contradiction 2); and a lack of economic opportunity due to lack of entrepreneurial communities (contradiction 3). In keeping with Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) notion of hegemony, a discussion then follows about the way that actors sought to negotiate and manage such lack drawing on emotional investment.

Central to the notion of 'city regions' was a shared discourse about the territorial importance of cities as important places in driving the 'engines of economic growth' in tackling the economic inequality which was perceived to result from the past decline of local industry (CSW 2009/10). Beliefs about the causes of such decline were rooted in actors broad experience of the collapse of local industry following recession, including the decline of the car manufacturing industry in Coventry in the 1970's and 80's' (DS 72, 208); and the decline of manufacturing in Birmingham 'from 75% to just 19%' (DS30, DS55). Actors shared a collective experience about the impact of such decline economically and socially in terms of a rapid decline in demand for the local specialist skill-base (DS4, DS21, DS55) the unexpected job loss of large numbers of the local populace (DS1; DS 55) and the emergence of huge swathes of derelict industrial land, as one actor described: 'sites that were fully

occupied, that were manufacturing jobs, have become derelict over the years and it's not just about bringing those sites back into use but…a sustainable use for the longer [term] (DS 1). Another actor noted the impact in terms of falling wage levels and local skill requirements, of being dependant on a manufacturing base which 'had not been replaced with high skilled employment' (DS 13, 86). This was compounded, for some by the emergence of a growing service industry which was seen to have failed in replacing either the skill level or the income level. What remained was an inherent difficulty in predicting the type of skills required in future workforce development (DS 11, 236). The frequent reference in discourse to the term 'city regions' was embodied in recognition of the central importance of cities in driving economic growth in the context of the broader region through 'connectivity' to surrounding areas in terms of employment. Hence much of the talk centered around how the socio-economic deprivation which had emerged as a result of economic decline might be reduced (economic inequality) through the re-development of the land, by attracting new industry and subsequent employment in an attempt to try and replace that which had been lost to economic decline (inward investment). In keeping with this, one actor spoke of the development plans following the demise of the Longbridge car plant in 2006:

> 'there were about 6000 people let go…and it's just been vacant there now and I think there is an aim that sets out to gain, bring about 10,000 new jobs directly or indirectly…as a course of the development, a bit of a new town centre, new transportation hub and…a technology corridor' (DS55, 66).

Another spoke of the development plans for an old steelworks involving the 'building of a new school, thousands of new homes, a leisure centre, and the development of the town

centre' (DS21, 191).   What naturally followed here was a common assumption of the need for employment skills training, as a means of building aspiration in the local workforce to access the new jobs created (employment skills). This was seen to require the development of entrepreneurial communities to ensure they were able to access these new opportunities coming on stream (economic opportunity).   Hence, in both regional and local documentation, the discourse centered on the notion of the 'growth agenda' in line with moves towards the development of a globally competitive city'. For instance, Birmingham's logo is 'a global city with a local heart'. The essence behind this approach was the frequently cited term, 'city regions' which were seen as central to achieving growth through wealth creation in the region by competing with other cities/ regions to enhance the basic offer in terms of housing, employment and leisure opportunities. A key part of this incentive to improve the 'offer' was premised on the idea of population growth, on the basis that if you create a viable city that people want to live and work in, wealth will automatically follow.   This rationale, based on 'trickle-down theory' was reflected in actors' attempts to retain 'high earners as well as attract newcomers to the city in the hope that wealth might be generated through spending and taxation and that this could be reinvested in the development of public services, as this actor describes: '[if] the facilities are there, the jobs are there, and…it's a viable city, you're getting more from people council tax wise and that can be put into services' (DS19, 317).

ENHANCING THE OFFER THROUGH INWARD INVESTMENT

The idea that it was possible to 'stem the outflow' of people leaving, by 'enhancing the housing and cultural offer' was based on 'creating the right environment within the city boundary' (DS3). This acted as a backdrop to much of this discursive communities' response to the demand for more appropriate housing and leisure facilities for middle income

families, in an attempt to prevent middle class flight. In line with this, one actor (DS4) described the importance of the Black Country study in terms of its strategic links to the Regional Spatial Strategy involving plans to build 70,000 new homes and create 160,000 new jobs, and 'build connectivity of the centres'. They noted how this was 'a huge piece of visionary work around how we can take an area of 1.1million people and turn it into an area of 1.2 million people and keep the high achievers in the area, spending money' (DS4, 51). Attempts to improve economic growth in this way, were reflected in regional government documents at the time of research, in particular the HCA in the WM region (HCA 2009/10) and its corresponding CSW sub regional housing growth strategy (2009/10), both of which discuss the potential for growth through private and public investment in the local housing market through public investment in new and affordable housing. Indeed, at the time of writing, the HCA had announced their plans to invest some £700 million across the region through their 'housing investment strategy' as a means of 'creating opportunities for people and places, highlighting the importance of 'sustaining house building during the downturn' and 'retaining construction skills and capacity' (HCA in WM; Regional Housing Action Plan for 2009/11, p: foreword). Sub-regionally, however, although the meaning of such growth was discussed in terms of meeting government targets for the numbers and types of housing development as well as employment for future populations, at the same time there was concern about the importance of striking a balance in terms of 'meeting diverse needs' of existing populations (CSW Sub regional Housing Growth Strategy 2009/11, p5). This stated intention to 'enhance the offer' is continued with the CSW sub regional economic development strategy (2009/ 10) which describes the threats and opportunities in the form of a SWOT analysis based on the spatial analysis of the 'assets and uniqueness' (p35) of the

Coventry, Solihull and Warwick area.   In this case, particular reference is made to the 'diverse business base generating wealth for the sub region' including its position as 'the home of the motor industry' (i.e. Jaguar, Land Rover, BMW Aston Martin and Pro Drive); the significance of key sites of historical interest such as 'Leamington, Warwick and Stratford'; and key areas of infrastructure such as the 'M42 corridor' and 'Coventry Airport' (p35).

Part of the focus of enhancing the offer of the city through private investment was through its capacity to act as a focus for both private and public sector investment.   Indeed, I witnessed this promotion at each of the local authorities I visited in each of the 3 case study sites which had reception/ waiting areas with glossy brochures promoting the vision for the city (observation notes). Typically, these consisted of information about both brownfield (as well as Greenfield) land which was available in the area for potential development as well as details of the current levels of pubic investment being made in the form of government 'regeneration' grants. One example is provided by the Area Prospectus Investment Plans (BCC 2010) or AIPs in Birmingham which showed that of the 60 areas identified as being in need of development, 1/3 of them have been secured involving £1.5 billion of investment. Specific examples include the 'Icknield Port loop', mixed use scheme involving the development of 2000 new houses; the re-development of the old BBC Pebble Mill site into a science park in collaboration with the University; and the re-development of the Selly Oak Hospital site into 1000 new homes. Public sector investment was advertised in terms of the Longbridge Area Action Plan (the site of the previous collapsed car manufacturer) (BCC 2010); 2 New Deal for Communities (NDC) projects including the Aston Pride NDC and the Kings Norton NDC, involving £50 million and £54 million of investment respectively; and a 'local centres' regeneration project involving £7 million pounds for the re-development of

local town centres, such as Sutton Coldfield. Another actor (DS72) talked about the Ansty Park technology park…'100 acres of old airfield close to the M6, fantastic site to open up…planners have a lovely time' (313)

The aim here was to attract inward investment from new industry wishing to re-locate to the city. This was seen as an important way of generating wealth, not only from the income generated through the sale of public land, but also from the increase in commercial taxes and new jobs they could potentially bring to an area. Consequently one actor described: "so if we can talk about a mixed use scheme in Wolves, there's a retail scheme, £300 million; hasn't started yet but when it comes it will bring a new M&S and a brand new Debenhams and 85 other shops" (DS 08). Included in with this was the potential to create new jobs as one actor described: "I think...there is an aim that sets out...to bring about 10,000 new jobs, directly or indirectly" (DS 55). Another suggested that there were multiple opportunities that could be brought from such inward investment and that 'physical regeneration went hand in glove with social regeneration' (DS1, 17) in the way that they provide physical developments, at the same time as bringing a requirement for investment in building new skills to replace those lost in times of economic decline.

In the case of public sector investment, the key to tackling economic inequality was around securing public investment for local infrastructure in terms of housing, transport and public services to support the increase in demand for services locally. For instance, at the time of writing, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) acted as the central government agency for overseeing the implementation of Sustainable Communities strategy (ODPM 2003), and implementing its vision in terms of affordable housing for all. Indeed, a HCA regional strategy document for the West Midlands regions reported an investment strategy of

around 7 million, for the development of both new and affordable homes, at the same time as renewing 'underperforming areas' in areas of so called 'housing market renewal' and 'assembling and remediating land' for the purposes of infrastructure development (p4). Job creation and training played a dual role in stimulating growth, with a stated aim of 'supporting local industry' and 'working with Housing Associations and Residential Social Landlords (RSL) to 'link capital to skills and training'. In Coventry, this translated into a strategic vision for the sub regional CSW partnership to stimulate growth through two means; the high technology corridor and the regeneration zone. The former formed the focus of some £30 million of public investment, whilst the latter involved some £15 billion of public investment (CSW Sub regional Housing growth strategy 2009/10, P8). Here, much energy was invested in making the area as attractive to the private sector as possible through removing barriers to trade and improving efforts to retain existing businesses (DS30). As one actor described: There was a sense that 'if you make the conditions as such that firms want to relocate there because you have an offer that is, acceptable to any, so you make the area attractive, you've made your population attractive in terms of skills attractive to...would be employers….You've got to be able to say to people, come here because' (DS08, 297). Incumbent in this was the perceived need to work better with business as another actor commented:

> 'I mean we've had lots of discussion with the private sector about how the council can work better with business….one of the big things that seems to spook business, is planning....and if you can break some of those barriers down. That makes a huge difference' (DS 11).

The idea behind investing in learning and skills arises out of the perceived need to ensure that people locally are able to access the new and emergent economic opportunities on offer: 'the modern economy relies on people having skills, so even if you create a modern economy job offer, you've got to ensure that the person has the skills to attain that' (DS1, 56). There was evidence of government investing heavily in the learning and skills agenda, most notably through commissioning 'national providers' to operate employment and skills schemes for local job seekers (DS42). There was also evidence of government investing in national scheme to improve the skills of partner agencies involved in the process of generating wealth creation through the Homes and Communities Agency or HCA (DS 44). At the time of writing this was seen as an integral part of the process of improving economic growth for the region and was premised on investing in improving the capacity of the private sector, public sector and third sector as 'the people responsible for creating sustainable communities' (HCA Academy Business Plan 2009/11, p3). Its importance is reflected in the presence of a specific government agency, whose role at the time of research was created specifically, as the 'skills arm of the HCA', with the stated aim of promoting the place-making role of local authorities to achieve 'better skills for better places' (p3). Training included the development of 'on-line courses and a foundation degree in sustainable communities'. Another central part of this investment in the learning and skills agenda was through partnership working between different sectors (DS 44). For instance, the HCA stated that they had a strategic role in co-coordinating a 'single conversation' across a range of partners' strategic and local planning frameworks including local development framework, the housing strategy and Local Area Agreement to ensure

that 'shared visions' and 'shared investment plans' were aligned (CSW, Sub Regional Housing Growth Strategy 2009/11). This attempt by regional bodies at local gap analysis represented an attempt to coordinate an otherwise complex arena of policies and strategies as a means of improving efficiency in terms of the delivery of outcomes (p5). This is described well by one actor:

> 'you have to do as much as you can to help the have not's; you know we've tried all sorts of procurement policies in terms of making sure local people can get local job opportunities, but…for those people to get those jobs, they have to have the right skills set (DS3, 383).

Increasing access to economic opportunities through entrepreneurism

The need to ensure that local people were able to access economic opportunities arose out of concern about the economic inequalities which formed between 'poor neighbourhoods' and 'very affluent neighbourhoods' (DS 21 67-69) and the need to 'bring these areas that have seen decline back into economic well-being' (DS 08). There was a sense, as one actor commented, that: 'you have to give the opportunity for people to improve their economic prospects in order for them to take advantage of things on offer' (DS 72). Whilst regeneration was not solely seen in terms of getting a job, at the same time it did form an important part of securing of a suitable income in order to meet basic needs (DS 08, 61). This included having access to a decent house and a decent job, and the notion that by being in employment there was greater chance of 'climbing the social ladder' (DS 11, 49). As a result, some actors said they would not 'count regeneration as a success if they had not brought jobs to the area' (DS1). Attempts to increase access to economic opportunities then, involved the development of a specialist knowledge base about deprived areas and

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the businesses opportunities which exist (DS 08, 310). In strategic partnerships that was matched by the mapping of potential areas for investment using 'clusters' and 'zones' in an attempt to maximise land use through travel and transport networks, as one actor described:

> "The aim was to set up 6 regeneration zones, to provide a strategic focus for investment. [The] main aim was to free up land to see where the public sector might intervene to produce commercially viable project which might need a bit of levering – [we] call it the economic side of regeneration to generate inward investment and employment opportunities" (DS 40)

TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Despite a clear commitment, in both official and unofficial documents, to tackling economic inequalities through growth there was, at the same time, evidence of tensions which arose to negate the outcomes of regeneration from being met. The first and possibly most significant of these apparent dualisms, involves the experience of a lack of investment due to a failure to bring new developments on stream because of global crisis. The second dualism involved the apparent failure of new developments to recruit from the local population due to a local skills-mismatch; and the third dualism involved a failure to create economic opportunities due to a lack of apparent entrepreneurism in some deprived communities. In light of this, we could argue then, that whilst the term city regions acts as a 'catch all' term for growth (nodal points) based on inward investment (floating signifier), enhancing learning and skills (floating signifier) and access to economic opportunity (floating signifier) there is evidence of discursive lack because of the apparent dualisms which act to negate the outcomes of growth. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to considering

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each of these contradictions and tensions in greater detail and the extent to which they constitute discursive lack.

Despite the need to stimulate local economic growth through inward investment, there was evidence that new developments had stalled in the current global economic recession making growth less likely (DS1, DS4, DS19): 'It's going to take longer than we thought…we've all got the plans…but it's just that we've got to get some private money to develop it and that's taking more time…if the credit crunch had been a little bit later, we would have been up and running" (DS19, 286).   On the basis that 'those with the least skills go first' (DS01, 179) there was some concern about how the current economic slowdown involved the service sector and expressed concern about the impact of this on the further widening of inequalities: 'you're getting the tap turned off at the top-end [in terms of] financing schemes, and the other end…the group your trying to help is…' (DS01, 174). Another tension emerged around the communities capacity to remain competitive in such a global-downturn, when typically, 'those areas that have proved themselves as being able to grow more quickly have tended to attract more investment [while] those areas which were poorest will be difficult to turn around' (DS1, 192). Ironically, what was being implied here was that because of the commercial nature of private sector investment: 'there may well be areas of need that are not…you know….able to attract the investment. Because other areas put their cases better' (DS1, 189). In responding to the effects of the recession, a number of 'knock on effects' were apparent in the form of so call austerity measures in public sector funding, thereby reducing the amount of funding available through government grants making it 'more difficult to bring [schemes] onto ground' (DS01, 170). This had the effect of

limiting the investment in infrastructure that was able to be made, as one actor described: 'so I guess in that sense, the one thing that we won't get in this country is the requirement to invest in infrastructure' (DS1, 205).

Aside from concern about the recent economic climate, there was mounting concern about the real capacity of the private sector to invest in a new area in the context of global trade (DS3). One actor suggested that: 'the amount of international companies is very limited, even the amount of big companies within this country is very limited. Actually growth comes from a very limited, small area. I'd be very surprised if many companies relocate to the Birmingham area outside of a 25 mile radius." (DS 11). This cast doubt on the strategy being relied upon to generate inward investment as a mean of improving the economic prosperity of an area. One actor described the knock on effect of dealing with an increasingly global industry whose local decision making capacity was clearly constrained by their broader global context: 'We've got a lot of cities in the area who are controlled from place like the USA and what those companies tell me is that they're on a balance sheet just like in a league table, and if they don't perform they get closed down – well if someone in USA makes a decision about a factory here, we could probably go over and lobby them but they're not going to take any notice of us" (DS3, 403).

LACK OF 'REAL' JOBS DUE TO SKILLS MISMATCH

Despite the inherent belief about the possibility for wealth through inward investment and job creation, there was evidence that this wasn't always reflected in a successful reduction in the unemployment figures locally, as this actor explains: "I mean one of the challenges I put to Job Centre Plus a while ago [is], they spend all this money on trying to get people off the unemployment register in this city, yet unemployment in this city is probably one of the

Lack	Discourse 1	Discourse 2	Discourse 3
Nodal Point	CITY REGIONS: "Tackling economic inequality through inward investment"	NARROWING THE GAP: "Tackling inequalities in health through service improvement"	BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY "Tackling social inequality through social enterprise"
Floating Signifiers	Inward investment Employment and skills Increasing economic opportunity	Service improvement Securing public investment Community involvement in service planning to increase access	Community networks Plugging gaps in service provision Securing funding to respond creatively to need
Tensions & Contradictions	Lack of investment due to global recession Lack of local jobs for local people Lack of entrepreneurial community	Lack of public sector investment Lack of strategy in community involvement Lack of communication	Lack of autonomy to respond flexibly to need Lack of trust from statutory sector partners Lack of sustainable funding
Objet petit a	Raising aspiration to tackle a cycle of decline	Brokering for better joined up working	Raising awareness of the third sector
Jouissance	Competing for public sector resources	Demonstrating public accountability	Double counting of success
Fantasy	Connecting up the global with the local	Running to stand still	Building sustainability through social enterprise

TABLE 10: COMPARING THE DISCOURSES

highest in this region – so my question is – you're spending all this money, but you're not making any difference, [because] if you were, these people would be coming off the unemployment register (DS 11, 168). There was also evidence that local people weren't always able to access the new jobs that had been promised due to jobs not materialising in the way agencies had expected or intended. Some of this had to do with agencies having re-located bringing an existing workforce with them. However, where an organisation did require new labour, there was often a mismatch between the typically low levels of skills held by the local population as compared with the typically high level required by incoming industry: "people haven't been able to get the...jobs that have been on offer and some of this is around low attainment rates"(DS??). Another actor noted the negative impact this had on the local population commenting that: "people go on about youngsters, but one thing is they're not stupid, they soon understand if those opportunities aren't revealed and they cannot access them" (DS 08, Developer). At the same time there was concern about the ability of training to resolve the problem of low skills as this actor described: "We were an area who has been dependant on manufacturing which has declined, [and] it's not been replaced with high skilled employment. So wage levels have fallen, skills requirements with employers has fallen, so the skill levels here are some of the worst in Europe. You look at our figures, we've got far more people with lower qualifications and far fewer people with level 4 and its very marker, but the numbers for 2 and 3 are about the same as the national average, but the big gap is top and bottom (DS4, 83).

LACK OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

The third contradiction lay in the shared view that despite the intention of regeneration to create economic opportunities that communities could take advantage of, there was also

evidence that deprived communities were hindered from doing so (ironically) because of their poor socioeconomic position: "at the bottom end of [area] you had nothing to begin with, you had a very stressed community, lot of issues around settled travelling comm[unities?]….basically the community with greatest need was actually the one that was least able to take the opportunities (DS 13, 28- 30). This was picked up by another actor who noted the irony behind the way that such development works: "I think the way that...a city economy works, those that have more, have a much better chance of making progress, haven't they?" (DS 11). Inherent within this was a sense that deprived communities, by their very nature lacked the mental and physical capacity to take advantage of what's on offer. Another noted the inherent contradiction involved with such development: "those areas which have proved themselves as being able to grow more quickly have tended to attract more investment. Those areas which were poorest will be difficult to turn around" (DS 08) The impact of this dilemma resonated in broader efforts to tackle income inequalities through increasing economic opportunity alone and was reflected in talk about the financial exclusion of deprived groups from new housing or retail developments: "you could argue that the economy will certainly benefit, [while] people who can't afford to shop in those shops...[won't] (DS 08). There was a general recognition that despite much concerted effort to tackle economic inequalities through development, areas remained entrenched in deprivation: 'Most deprived areas [are] still the same [as] 30 years ago…wealth creation and trickle down [are] very hard" (DS30). Similarly, another actor noted how 'the Ricoh [arena] which was part of the regeneration zone, and the shopping complex around it...and the work that was undertaken with Tesco to make sure local people got the local jobs.....but it

doesn't get away from the fact that those areas that were deprived 10 or 20 years ago, are still those areas that are deprived today" (DS 72,235 – 239)

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

According to Laclau, the failure to suture or fix a discourse is reflected in discursive lack which appears in the form of tensions and contradictions in the discourse. As a result, Laclau suggests that actors resort to affective responses in which they seek to appease the dissonance created by this lack. Drawing from Jacques Lacan, Laclau presents three forms of emotional investment, the first of which relates to the romantic pursuit of an ultimate object of desire (objet petit a); the second of which seeks to describe the 'pleasure pain' experience that might be experienced in the struggle to achieve such a goal (jouissance); and the third, which manifests itself in the form of a fantasmic projection, based on attempts to manage and cope with failure to achieve an impossible goal (fantasy).

OBJET PETIT A (OBJECT OF DESIRE): BUILDING ASPIRATION & SKILLS TO TACKLE A CYCLE OF DECLINE

The idea that low aspirations lay at the root of deprivation was premised on concern about the longer term impact of industrial decline on children born to parents who which had undergone industrial decline. Such fears were premised on a belief about communities becoming trapped in a cycle of decline in which it was perceived as normal to be unemployed, as this actor describes: 'those with jobs have children who have jobs, those who don't have jobs have children who don't have jobs' (DS01). Another actor told of his own personal experience of it being so abnormal to be seen wearing a suit where he used to live, that local people would joke about them 'probably going to a wedding' (DS 27). Interestingly, such assumptions appeared to fuel the fears that the effects of parents' experience of economic decline might have the effect of 'rubbing off' on their children,

thereby making them less likely to secure employment themselves, as this actor described: "if you're a person who's been out of work for God knows how long, what chance have you got of motivating their children?' (DS01, 363). The need to curb this lowering of expectations based on the historical experience of their parents, was rooted in the desire to encourage young people to take advantage of new opportunities on offer, as this actor describes: "They're walking out of school now not able to get a job or if they do, it's a rubbish job. They could go into factories, they could go to British Steel, John Thompsons, you name it, we had it, so there isn't an idea that education matters (DS19). Underpinning such attempts was a desire to 'tackle a cycle of poverty' on the basis that people with low aspiration were more likely to get involved in drugs and crime (DS19), more prone to teenage pregnancy (DS19), have access to the worst housing (DS1) and be more prone to making poor lifestyle choices such as smoking, drinking and unhealthy eating (DS1, DS72). Collectively, there was some use of the term 'problem family' too (DS13) as well as the concept of 'broken homes' (DS19, 115). This assumption by actors appeared to translate into a desire to 'fix' the situation through social intervention, as this one actor describes: "I remember talking with [name of minister] in the cabinet office, one of our MP's, and he was looking at a scheme where they'd actually put whole families into care, and it was quite frightening to me at the time, but now I'm wondering whether that sort of......really quite deep rooted intervention into families which are...which are....going nowhere [is what's required] (DS 13, 40). Consequently, there was a desire by actors in this discursive community, that if they worked to raise the aspirations of young people, it might be possible to intervene in the cycle of decline by increasing the chances of taking advantage of opportunities on offer locally: "They're not thick, they're just not being asked to achieve.

They need pushing. They've come from parents who've been used to walking out of school at 15, 16 right into a job that was a good job, that's gone (DS19, 75). Fuelling this assumption was a belief about the benefits of trickle down, in that: 'if you start bringing in a slightly higher level of aspirations or workforce in that [area] it's going to trickle down…it works both ways so you know kids will want to aspire to it because it's what they see' (DS55, 88). There was a sense here then, that in providing a visual example of what was possible to young people, they would somehow 'absorb' the opportunities available to them and that eventually this would lead to the desired/sought after object of 'improvement in quality of life', as this actor describes: 'you know that it will be a good place to live and work at the end of the day and that's what we want' (DS55, 90). However, this ultimately remained a romantic act because of the inherent lack associated with employment and skills; not least owing to a lack of jobs due to recession, and a skills mis-match between the jobs brought by high industry and those of the local populace. This emotional investment made by actors remained an inherently romantic act, because it was also bound up in an assumption that no matter how much intervention in terms of inward investment, learning and skills and efforts to increase access to opportunity, these areas would continue to remain deprived. Here, two actors talk about how: 'We've poured into some communities' they still remained the same (DS 13); and that these are "very deprived areas, but [there's] always going to be winners and losers" (DS 44).

JOUISSANCE: COMPETING FOR PUBLIC SECTOR RESOURCES

In surfacing the ways that actors handled the tensions that arose, there was a belief that interference from central government continually lay at the root of all problems with implementing regeneration policy. Here, actors sought to complain about the constant interference from central government in the form of targets and performance management

incentives and the counteractive effect that this had on attempts to stimulate competition.

For instance, one actor spoke of the frustration after the regional development agency

withdrew all their funding following the recent recession (DS 72). At the same time, they

also complained about the delays experienced in getting decisions, securing funding. Hence,

despite the push for private sector investment, public sector investment was, in reality,

critical to getting schemes off the ground, contributing in the form of government grants,

the supply and remediation of supply of land and the provision of supportive local

infrastructure. This set up a competition for resources both between cities, not only for

private sector competition but also for government resources. Indeed one developer

explained how with the current recession, he could foresee future problems with not only a

slowdown in private sector investment, but also from the 'tap being turned off' at the other

end by government. This presented an interesting analogy here in private sector, perceiving

government funding as a regular supply of water and suggests that there is a high degree of

subsidy going on here, in terms of private sector reliance on government funding to survive.

Indeed, this can be witnessed at its most highest level in the partnership arrangements

between government and 'national providers' of, for instance, employment and skills

services (DS?), but also private sector developers involved in the construction of new

housing development and PFI projects involving hospitals and schools). Indeed this was

reflected in the data where most of the investment discussed in the interviews involved

partnerships between the construction of public buildings (hospitals through PFI initiatives,

GP surgeries through the LIFT programme, Building schools for the future – BSF programme

through PFI?). Hence, despite frequent complaints by both the private sector actors (URCs,

Developers etc) and public sector actors (local authority regeneration and ED officers) about

the pace and scale of government funding, they were in actual fact unable to proceed with regeneration projects without it! This set up a kind of ritualistic dance whereby, complaints were bandied around about the 'bureaucratic nature of funding allocations in central government' (DS 30) and the 'decision making structures' (DS3).

FANTASY: CONNECTING UP THE GLOBAL WITH THE LOCAL
Fantasy appeared to stem from the belief that despite the difficulties associated with wealth creation, the difficulties with securing investment and binging development to ground due to recession; the failure of developments to provide jobs with an appropriate skill-level which matched the local populace, and the failure to generate entrepreneurial communities, it was still possible to overcome this by connecting up the global with the local. Building on the romantic notions of 'building aspiration to tackle a cycle of decline' (objet petit a)'; fantasy emerged through the notion that despite the continual efforts of public sector partners to secure good relationships with business (DS19) by streamlining the planning processes and removing barriers to local trade (DS3) in reality, public sector agencies were seen to hold very little control over private sector agencies' investment decisions, or indeed where they chose to be located because ultimately, the drivers of growth were seen to lie outside of the local arena, but rooted in a more global context. This would suggest that efforts to try and 'reconnect the local with the local' are nothing short of fantasmic in the sense that no matter what public sector partners do, there always lies the risk of companies re-locating and taking their investment elsewhere or indeed closing down due to recession. This is perhaps shown most clearly in one actors' narrative about the continued desire to discuss the benefits of developing a 'technology corridor' in one area (based on 'manufacturing' having gone to the Far East) despite his experience of a similar development already having stalled in the recent economic downturn:

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'those who have very little skills are the hardest to reach…the lowest levels of skills are the hardest to help…and one would say that I presume those who…have benefitted least, on the basis that what is being created by this modern economy are not jobs that require no skills' (DS1, 122)

There is further evidence of fantasy at the strategic planning level in that in order to deliver any regeneration initiative, suitable funding must first be secured. This involves a political dimension and a degree of bartering about what can and can't be done within the confines of government targets that have been set, and the level of financing which is available. For instance, one actor described how they had to change the name and the spatial boundary of a bid in order to ensure that an area of private sector housing was included and not missed out of regeneration funds. Not only does this introduce a form of priority setting (or some might call it rationing) to the regeneration process (where decisions have to be taken about what can realistically be achieved given finite resources) it also increases the potential for gaming by different partners to reach their own targets, depending on their raison d'être and value base. This was evidenced in complaints about the potential for gaming with private sector national providers short term approach to meeting targets by 'ticking the box' in order that funding could be drawn down.   In the face of such pressure it is understandable that some opt for tackling what is easiest to deliver. This is reflected in attempts to meet targets to improve social housing rather than targets to improve privately owned/ rented housing which some would argue has a greater need. In some ways this, offers a critique to the notion of spatial targeting because decisions have to be made about what is left in and what is left out. It also has the potential to introduce gaming behaviour as actors attempt to negotiate and manage/ broker their own experience of what's required

on the ground.   But there is also a question about the notion of scale here, in questioning

the efficiency of having a system of bartering about what gets regenerated and what does

not. Where these processes are linked to performance targets there is potential for gaming

where actors are forced to focus on 'what government require' rather than 'what

communities require'.

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS

DISCOURSE 2: NARROWING THE GAP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY THROUGH SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The second narrative can be described in terms of 'Narrowing the gap' in life expectancy in which it was perceived that inequalities in health could be tackled through investment in service provision (See figure 4). In contrast to the previous discourse which focused on the role of city regions in tackling economic inequality through growth, a second discourse emerged in which regeneration was seen very much in terms of tackling health inequalities through service improvement (floating signifier); by securing resources for public investment (floating signifier); and involving the community in service planning (floating signifier). However, in keeping with a critical analysis approach, as was apparent in the first discourse, contradictions and tensions emerged as a result of failure to secure adequate resources for public investment (contradiction1); a failure to strategically co-ordinate the involvement of communities in service planning (contradiction 2); and a failure to communicate the benefits of any improvements in service provision, to communities (contradiction 3).

Tackling Health Inequalities
•service improvement
•public investment
•community involvement in service planning

Increasing Health Inequalities
•lack of public investment
•lack of stategic involvement
•lack of access to new services
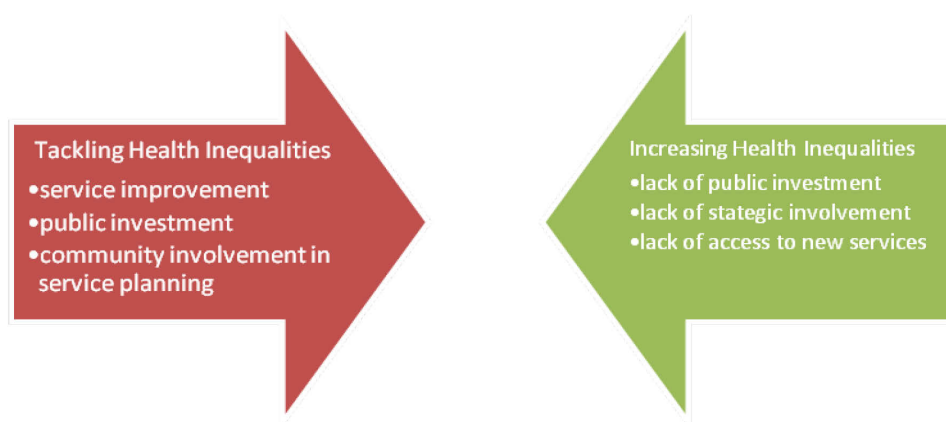
Figure 4: Showing discursive lack in attempts to tackle health inequalities

We will now discuss each of these findings in turn, in relation to their potential to serve as nodal points and floating signifiers as evidence of discursive lack and the emotional investment made by stakeholders in making sense of such contradictions and tensions.

NARROWING THE GAP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY THROUGH SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The idea that deprivation could be tackled through service improvement was premised on assumptions about the role that poor socio-economic circumstances was seen to play in determining *'life chances'* and creating *inequalities in health* (DS 10, 3; DS 37, 14; DS 39). One actor described how the language of 'narrowing the gap' assisted in helping people to articulate a series of policy areas which could be translated into a series of 'service changes' where performance could be measured in terms of a series of outcomes for health and well being:

> 'we're not talking about absolute poverty in terms of an amount of money that people should have or how many cars, but looking at it as a state of comparison with the rest of the population (DS 37, 10).

Central to this notion of 'narrowing the gap' was the perceived capacity of regeneration to address *inequalities in health or 'life chances'* through investment in service improvement. One actor described how:

> 'regeneration addresses those people who for various reasons [are] having problems, not just accessing employment but might, as a result of a whole set of circumstances, have less opportunities, life chances in terms of health, leisure etc.' (DS10, 28-30).

A key component of this discourse drew on notions of 'place' and 'choice'. The *importance of place* was reflected in the notion of 'wealthy' and 'less wealthy' areas and the impact this was seen to have in terms of reducing life expectancy (DS 10 3-8; DS49, 35, DS 52, 72).   So, for instance, one actor talked about being 'worse for health in the whole of [the city] because of recorded differences in life expectancy of between 5 and 7 years between the west side and the east side'(DS 49). Another talked about deprivation in terms of 'where people who are disadvantaged tend to live' (DS 52, 72).

The strategic use of place was a key part of national policy to promote local government role in 'place shaping', which sought to target specific areas based on their relative ranking in terms of measures of 'multiple indices of deprivation' with other areas (ODPM 2004). One actor described how such indices assisted in the allocating of resources for tackling deprivation as a measure of need: 'through the indices of deprivation, a formula would basically see a differential in the amounts allocated to constituencies' (DS 39, 36 – 37). Inherent within such notions of place were opportunities to improve quality of life by improving the physical and economic environment. One actor talked about the potential that new services coming in, offered in 'answering a number of the deprivation indices exhibited there' (DS 49, 114). Another described how:

> "It's just glaringly obvious when you're in places that...the physical environment and the opportunities that offers, the facilities it offers, the work places it offers, the living spaces, the environment is entirely tied with poverty basically, deprivation" (DS 52, 65).

In keeping with this, the *importance of 'choice'* was reflected in national policy to promote public health's role in 'addressing the wider determinants of health' in recognition of the conditions required to enable people to make 'healthy choices'. For instance, one actor noted how 'if you've got money you can buy yourself out of that, but if you've got none of those things, your choices are restricted and...don't deliver much more than subsistence" (DS 52, 88 – 90). Consequently, policy solutions to 'narrowing the gap' were perceived in terms of *improving access to opportunity* to a range of public services seen to affect quality of life such as housing, health services, leisure, employment and education, with the ultimate aim of reducing the differential in life expectancy through efforts to bring about improvements in quality of life (DS 49, 35). Here, actors talked about "bringing new services to the area, affordable housing and new housing and potential' (DS49, 108) on the basis that 'people could find work within the area'.

The perceived need to invest in public services as a means of tackling health inequality to improve life chances was frequently reflected in the talk of managers of area based initiatives who spoke about the importance of bringing in new GP services, new leisure services, litter and street cleansing and policing to an area in the belief that it would increase access to public services and subsequently reduce inequality (DS 54). One actor in particular, noted how, when they talked about regeneration policy, they were referring to 'working with our partners in the Local Authority, the Primary Care Trust, the police service, and others about how they deliver services in their area' (DS 37, 68).

Linked to this notion of wider determinants then, was the important contribution that individual's could bring to the process through lifestyle change and many actors in this discursive community described a range of initiatives they had been involved in to try and

tackle health inequalities from this individual level. One in particular, talked about instituting a 'fit for life programme' which was designed to target middle aged men 'with a propensity for having high cholesterol, lack of exercise and being at risk of CHD' (DS39). Such reference to notions of 'health improvement' speaks to the public health discourses and can be witnessed in strategic policy efforts to tackle health inequalities through primary prevention and lifestyle change.

SECURING PUBLIC INVESTMENT FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

The idea that service improvement might be achieved through the securing of resources for public investment, stemmed from a shared belief about the ongoing failure by local authorities to invest in public services in the past. One actor spoke of how as a result of 'years of underinvestment by the LA' there was 'an unwillingness to maintain properties, causing a spiral of decline which in turn had reduced house prices because of the poor physical environment which adds to the scale of improvements needed to bring housing up-to-date (DS37). The idea that it was the underinvestment in public services over time that had contributed to their demise appeared an important part of 'framing the problem in order that resources for an area could be secured. Thus, in keeping with the actors in the first discourse, it was important for actors in this second discursive community to secure as much funding as possible for an area. Indeed, one actor described how this notion of resources had actually influenced their decision to take this post, because it had been 'ear-marked as a regeneration project with large scale funds attached', which offered 'potential to make a real step change in quality of life (DS49).

Part of the appeal to actors in this discursive community then, was the capacity of regeneration to target those perceived to be in most need by investing in interventions now

with the aim of preventing health and social problems from occurring later on. For instance, one actor discussed how a programme they were running in one part of the city to assist a very small number of people at risk of chaotic lifestyles and criminality, would result in much greater efficiencies in the longer term; 'the cost of which everybody who enters into the criminal justice system is over £100,000 per person' (DS 39, 187). This 'upstream approach' was common to national policy in public health seeking to tackle the wider determinants of health. There were perceived cost implications too in making the most of finite resources, as one actor explained: 'so that you're not wasting money, dealing with the effects of crime, chaotic lifestyles and domestic violence etc' (DS 39, 183). The benefits were summed up by another actor: 'it takes a lifetime to compensate for however many years of failed schooling' (DS 52, 58).

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE PLANNING TO INCREASE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Community involvement formed the basis of stakeholders' efforts to improve public services in an effort to legitimate the process of priority setting in service planning according to locally identified issues and problems: 'I suppose the approach I think personally [is where] you invest in the people so you're engaging the people in helping to find solutions' (DS10, 37-39). Here, actors saw their role in trying to

> "Understand the inter-relationship between those different issues [to] try to tackle all of them...working with local people so that they identify what is important to them" (DS 37, 63).

Community involvement then was relied upon as an important means of communicating with communities not only in terms of service planning, but also in terms of communicating the progress of regeneration initiatives in order to publicise new services coming on stream.

The assumption that communities *should* be involved in planning the services that they receive was bound up in notions of empowerment and based on the assumption that by involving communities, it would enhance a greater sense of community ownership, and increase the likelihood of communities being able to access new opportunities on offer, as this actor describes:

> "it should mean that those buildings going up interact with children and it involves site visits and it involves them in the design work, that those are not white elephants...and it's for them, it's not something that you have to be dressed in certain way to go in..." (DS 49).

In keeping with this, the process of needs assessment formed the basis of such attempts to encourage community ownership through the use of techniques such as 'planning for real' which involved the community in priority setting, as this actors described: "So we've gone through a similar process here through using planning for real and the old questionnaires, household survey to work out what the issues for people in the area were and what the priorities were – we've done visioning too, to decide, [to] get people to look at what should be the priorities in the next 18 months" (DS 49). Another confirmed this, describing how:

> "We did a planning for real exercise and...drew up a neighbourhood action plan, user led activities" (DS 37).

Statistics were also used to gather information about community need, through population needs assessment to identify levels of deprivation as a basis for prioritising demand, as this actors described:

"it [statistics] provides us with a narrative of what's going on in a neighbourhood and a community...we have for the first time, a breakdown of a super output area award basis, efficiency basis, performance data on a whole host of issues [like] key stage 1,2,3,4 results, info on crime, disorder, info on domestic violence" (DS39, 175).

TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

In keeping with a critical approach to policy analysis and also the findings in the first discourse, despite a clear commitment to tackling inequalities in health through service improvement, there was at the same time evidence of tensions which arose to negate these stated outcomes from being met. The first and possibly most significant of these tensions involved the experience of a lack of public investment where despite stated intentions to secure resources for service improvement, there was evidence of a lack of resources. In the second tension, despite stated intentions about the importance of involving communities in service planning, there was evidence of a lack of strategic approach to service planning, leading to duplication and in-fighting. In light of this then, it could be argued that whilst the term 'narrowing the gap acts as a 'catch all' term for service improvement (nodal points) based on securing public investment (floating signifier), involving the community in service planning (floating signifier) and communicating the benefits (floating signifier) there is evidence of discursive lack because of the apparent dualisms which act to negate the outcomes of service improvement for improving health and well being. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to considering each of these contradictions and tensions in greater detail and the extent to which they constitute discursive lack.

Despite the importance of securing investment for service provision, tensions emerged around the ability to access to resources. This appeared to be partly because of competition with other areas in terms of mainstream spend and partly to do with the perceived with-holding of funds from targeted NDC areas on the basis of already having received funds as a result of its 'targeted status'. In relation to the funding being limited in relation to mainstream spend, one actor described how:

> '...it's critical...to have a chunk of money, although...even in our programme, which is £53.5 million, in comparison to the spending power of the LA, PCT...[it's] pretty small beer' (DS37, 140).

The difficulty in securing resources was further complicated by the assumption that such areas had already had their allocation of resources where instead of acting to lever in funds from elsewhere, statutory agencies had a tendency to re-direct public investment elsewhere on the basis that they were already in receipt of public funding (DS 54). One actor described how, as a result:

> "the local authority...understandably thinks about its population as a whole, and whilst there is some recognition that they are...a priority area, the level of resource spent in the city does not always follow these priority areas" (DS37, 72).

The basis of such complaints extended from ideas that 'real' efforts to tackle inequality were labour and cost intensive and as such needed to be targeted at individuals to be sustainable:

"We've got a programme running across the Southwest and the East of the city [where out of] ninety four long term unemployed, twenty four of them are [now] in work. These are people who...were at risk of serious chaotic lifestyles of criminality, the cost of which everybody who enters into the criminal justice system is over £100,000" (DS 39, 276-270).

In another example involving a local authority, tensions surrounding the allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal funding led to one type of regeneration initiative being given precedence over others: "The problem is that many parts of the city...the £150 odd million that came into the [city], is that is stayed around that kind of 'Clean and Safer' realm and didn't go into other realms'. (DS39, 100-102).

LACK OF STRATEGY IN COORDINATING SERVICE PLANNING

Another tension emerged in the form of a lack of strategy in service planning surrounding the administrative arrangements and decision making structures. In one example, involving an area based initiative, despite the initiative promising a whole array of new public services including a GP surgery and leisure centre, actors (n=3) spoke about their surprise about the

"lack of co-ordination between new services going in, talking to each other, and that lack of overview and strategic plan of how you're going to maximise those training and employment learning opportunities between the three" (DS49, 122).

Other examples seemingly pertained to distinct lack of strategy associated with community involvement mechanisms resulting in 'a hotchpotch of...duplication [and] lack of coordination, which prompted a large scale review'. One officer described how the introduction of a local government initiative required them to create eight new community

involvement structures to cover the whole city, despite already having a functioning involvement structure in place:

> "if we'd been able to take that resource and add it to the resource that we had around the [community involvement structure] we could have added significant value because the health providers, the social care providers all signed up and were already working with the [community involvement structure]. What we've had to do is create something independent which sits outside of that..." (DS10).

In this particular case, the failure to account for the scale of such an existing and well established VCS community involvement structures in favour of creating a completely new statutory structure resulted in a call from central government to 're-align' structures causing inevitable concern about employment:

> "...everyone was worried [because] people thought they might be losing their jobs...and what the report concluded was that there was a lot of duplication and lack of coordination...and proposed the merging of... [two]...forums into one body...which didn't go down very well..." (DS 10, 60-67).

In another case, this same lack of a strategic approach to service planning led to so called 'local politicking' in which an existing voluntary sector provider insisted on continuing to host an existing community involvement provision despite the recommendation of their advice to disband following a Government Office review:

"As an accountable body, they should have a role in ensuring system and processes, decision making...and so on, were sorted out early, and I think the first team really struggled with that" (DS37, 246).

This failure to respond to requests to improve the coordination service planning resulted in the duplication of existing services and the wasting of resources.   The apparent failure to listen and take account of the local context in planning for the arrival of new public services formed the basis of what was very much missing from this discourse (see discourse 3). It had the capacity to place a strain on local relations which emerged in the form of in-fighting. In another case involving an Area Based Initiative, this tension reportedly resulted once again, in central government 'stepping in' to revise the board structure, and instigating an independent chair. Reflecting on this, the actor noted how:

"starting with the structures, what didn't work well in the beginning, was a lack of preparation of the community in the decision making structures, the bidding process for the monies had local groups, religious organisations and others and I think they had an expectation that there would be a reward in the delivery of the programme and that caused quite a lot of conflict at the outset" (DS 37, 233).

Part of the problem for some rested on the failure to adequately link the different policies which existed at different spatial levels:

"I don't think there's enough links to the policy...because I don't think for the most part, residents...understand the knock on effect...if they have something in their area, if they do something, how does it affect the neighbouring areas, how does it affect the city?..." (DS18, 69).

The failure to adequately coordinate service provision manifested itself in a failure to involve communities, removing communication channels with communities and preventing them from being kept informed of progress and the opportunity to take part in service planning and ultimately being able to access any new services coming on stream:

"We were told that because of the national importance of the [regeneration initiative], the engagement with the population needed to be through a forum set up to ensure communication but once the funding was over, it closed (DS 49, 43).

In one example involving an urban renaissance programme, there was a distinct lack of publicity to communities living in the vicinity of the planned programme, despite it being promoted as bringing new services, including new GP, housing and leisure services to the local area which local communities would benefit from, as this actor described:

"Outside of what we're instigating there – there is not a newsletter for the [regeneration initiative] that goes to every household. There's no level of communication to general 'jo public' who lives in the surrounding district, albeit there will be press releases and people will read that in the local paper, but in terms of drip by drip communication on it, it's missing' (DS 49, 323).

This failure to inform communities about new services coming into an area emerged in narrative about 'local people losing out' from regeneration, which seemed to have the opposite of its desired effect to reduce inequality by socially excluding residents from the opportunity to participate in activities which would improve their health, as this Neighbourhood Manager working with a local urban renaissance programme describes:-

"the implication from what I've said is that...the poorest, [most] excluded in society...should benefit, including those at the margins. You know that's the theory, whether it's happened in practice is a different matter' (DS 10, 10-16)

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

In seeking to understand how such tensions and contradictions are managed, Jacques Lacan's notions of the affective realm are brought to the fore. Here, Lacan suggests how actors might wish for an idealised future through objet petit a, enjoying the pleasure and pain of its possibility through jouissance, but which also remain distant from attaining a goal because of its ultimate impossibility or inherent lack through its fantasmic realm .

OBJET PETIT A: BROKERING FOR BETTER JOINED UP WORKING

In considering romantic notions of objet petit a, there is a sense that regeneration fails because of a lack of strategy surrounding access to public services and that a more coordinated approach (i.e. someone picking up the threads between strategy and delivery) would improve things:

"You need to manage it properly [schemes], you need to have a balance and what we did was good partnership working because we work with Connexions to do the recruitment, we work with colleagues to put the job offer and we work with constituencies to do the placements in terms of neighbourhood working" (DS 39, 276 – 279):

"Now there's no reason why that approach can't be replicated on a more local basis, particularly through LAA's, if partners are truly willing [adds emphasis] to share

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resources that they've got and share decision making. At the moment that's a still very much in its early days" (DS 49, 150).

Annoyance at the a lack of strategic approach seemed to be managed through a kind of dissonance which manifested itself as through appeasing, diplomacy approach in which officers tried to make sense of the possible reasons why this situation might have arisen (i.e. 'these directors of services are very busy people' or 'they have very large portfolio's to manage').This is described here by an officer who despite complaining about duplication of involvement structures, praises how this is being managed on the ground:

> "So, [despite already having involvement structure]..we ended up procuring the VCS working with the CA bureau. I have to say, I think they're doing a fantastic Job, particularly in terms of inclusion...I really do. And they've put a few noses out of joint to do that and in my view gone about it in the right way. They've put the PPI people on the back burner, and went out and sought...people from BME background, disabled people (Community Involvement worker, SA 109).

In another example involving a Neighbourhood Manager delivering an urban regeneration initiative, complaints about a lack of communication due to the closure of an involvement structure are managed by brokering to 'fill the gaps' in service provision, by teaming up with other involvement structures locally to provide information:

> "...where we've got things under discussion we may get – and we've got as meeting next weds...community reps from other local partnerships who are asking if they can attend our meetings so they can get the same INFO - we're open to that but it's not as clever as it might be" (DS 49, Neighbourhood Manager).

In the interviews, stakeholders' efforts to improve public service were tightly bound to notions of public accountability. This appeared to be in an attempt to demonstrate financial probity and value for money to government:

> "Increasingly there's a clear line of accountability to DCLG...there's also a connection to Government Office [and] a very strong relationship with the local authority, both in terms of them being the accountable body, so they make sure, you know, that I don't run off with the money and it all gets properly spent and accounted for" (DS 37, Manager, ABI, West Midlands Region).

This concern for accountability was underpinned by a political need to demonstrate success to the electorate. Here a Manager from an ABI talks about the political pressure on service heads to deliver stated outcomes and the important role that a 'public sector ethos' played in this:

> "Politicians worry about losing the next election primarily..and the pressure that puts on local government staff...because...if [a] local government manager says I will achieve x result, by this time and don't, then they [politicians] can become very critical of them. Conversely there is no reward...other than professional pride and a wish to improve things...which is very much there amongst service providers and is often under-rated" (DS 37, Manager, ABI, West Midlands region)

FANTASY: RUNNING TO STAND STILL

The notion of jouissance refers to the experience of pleasure/ pain generated by an object being unattainable. The notion of running to stand still was a common complaint to many actors subscribing to the discourse of narrowing the gap. The analogy was a powerful one,

conjuring up images about the scale of the challenges facing regeneration practitioners, on the basis that: 'you've not only got to keep apace but you've got to do all that catching up…you've got to work twice as fast in an area that's deprived as an area that isn't because those other areas are changing as well (DS52, 196). In terms of improving life expectancy, what actors were responding to here, was the degree of effort required merely to align deprived areas with the national average, on the basis that the 'upper limits are moving' all of the time' (DS 52, 187).

CHAPTER 9

FINDINGS

DISCOURSE 3: BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

From the analysis of interviews with over fifty stakeholders, around seven actors could be said to ascribe to a 'building community capacity' discourse in which the urban problem was seen in terms of the public sector's failure to meet community needs through existing service provision (See figure 5). This invoked a storyline about the requirement for development work to build community capacity through a thorough understanding of the needs of deprived groups (NP); by building community networks (FS) and securing funding in the form of grants (FS) in order to plug gaps in service provision (FS). However, contradictions emerged in the form of a lack of autonomy to make decisions about the nature of development work (C1); a perceived lack of trust to manage regeneration programmes (C2); and a lack of sustainable funding (C3).

BUILDING CAPACITY
Plugging gaps in need
Community Networks
Securing grant funding

LACK OF CAPACITY
Lack of autonomy to be creative
lack of trust from partners
lack of long term sustainable funding
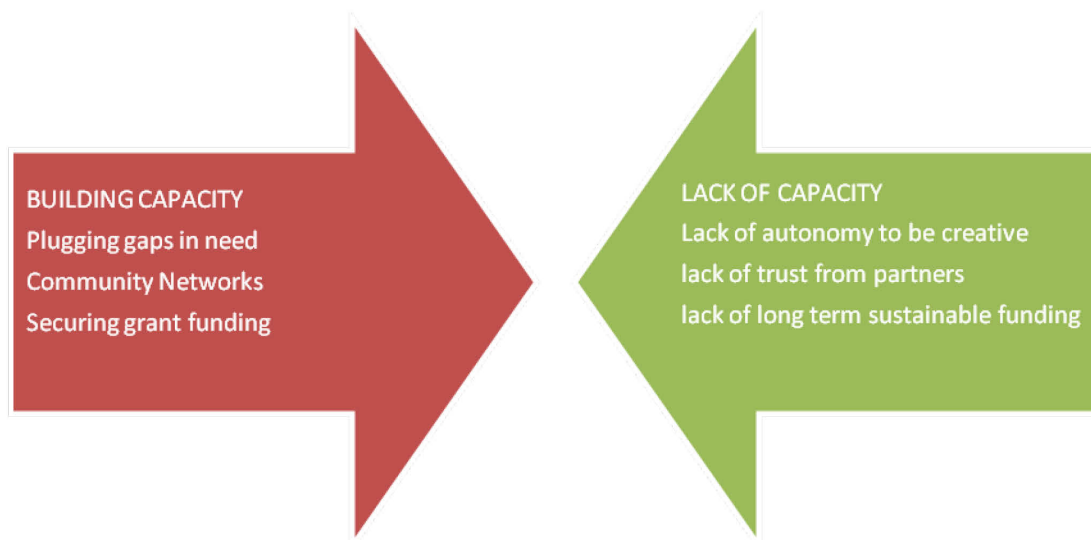
FIGURE 5: SHOWING DISCURSIVE LACK IN ATTEMPTS TO BUILD CAPACITY

Central to the notion of building community capacity in this discursive community was the idea that in the past public services had failed to tackle deprivation because of a lack of understanding of community needs. One actor summed this up well stating how services needed to be 'client led' on the basis that "whilst a lot of policies will look at things, I don't think they go right down to the grass roots" (DS42, 80 – 82). What was often being alluded to here was the importance of not just involving the public in decision making (as with the second discursive community) but in listening to their stories in order to understand the impact that deprivation was having on their lives (DS10, DS18, DS35, DS42, DS48). Consequently, in sharp contrast to actors in the first discursive community who perceived regeneration to be about tackling economic inequality through growth; and the second discourse who perceived regeneration to be about tackling health inequalities through service provision; actors in this third discourse perceived regeneration in much broader terms as a means of tackling social inequality through building community capacity. Such beliefs appeared to be rooted in actors' personal experience of living and working amongst deprived communities in the form of residents, local entrepreneurs, community activists, volunteers and service users. As a result, unlike that of other discursive communities, actors typically referred to having a shared knowledge and experience of deprivation from the perspective of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups (DS10); economic migrants and asylum seekers (DS 48); those with physical or mental health disabilities (DS 10, DS 42), long term unemployment (DS18) and lone parents (DS18). One actor in particular, described how:

"It's a very mixed area, very diverse in terms of communities. There's a large Punjabi, Sikh community living here but you've also got African Caribbean, but on

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top of those sort of indigenous BME communities, then you've got newer international communities'" (DS35 82-86).

Another actor described how they related the high levels of disability locally to past heavy industry, making 'women who look old before their time' (DS10, 86). This perception that regeneration was about addressing the needs of a complex web of very different types of communities experiencing deprivation contrasted sharply with the first discursive community which appeared to speak exclusively about the need to target young people described as 'second and third generation unemployment' in tackling worklessness; and the second discursive community which typically referred to people living in 'deprived places' typically defined by indices of multiple deprivation. Hence, for this small (n=7), yet clearly distinctive discursive community in comparison to the preceding discourses, the idea of building capacity represented a more 'people-based' approach to tackling deprivation as a means of addressing the needs of more marginalized groups in society experiencing deprivation. For these actors, the key to regeneration here, was in its ability to draw in actors with a wide and very varied personal and professional skill-base who were able to work flexibly to address gaps in need. Such needs were perceived to have arisen as a result of the failure of mainstream provision to listen and respond to 'real' community need. For instance, one actor described how in official documentation, the patch they were working in was always considered 'white working class', despite also having a number of different Asian communities living there for a long time (DS10, 7 -11). In another example, an actor described how the area they currently lived in had become very ethnically diverse as a result of the continual flux of communities leaving and arriving in the area, but that this wasn't always reflected in mainstream service planning (Ds48):

"The area I live in, there's a 22% impact in terms of EU migrants. The Polish have left because of the economic downturn, but [we're] left with Lithuanian/ Slovakian groups/ Romanies." (DS 48, 209).

As a result, this actor described how as a lay representative of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), they sought to draw their attention to an emergent problem involving misunderstandings about the way local immigrants 'liked to stand around drinking and smoking or throw rubbish out of the back doors' (DS48, 209) by securing some funding to raise awareness of the way that public services worked in the local community (DS 48, 227). In another example of building capacity, another actor spoke about how the voluntary sector organisation they were working for, had set about developing a much broader range of services than those available in the mainstream, by offering clients with long term health problems, disabilities, the practical and emotional support they needed in order to return to work (DS42):

"We had one client, a young girl, who'd had a severe car accident when she was seventeen. When she first came to us she couldn't even look at anyone. Two years later she left here after being on our voluntary group doing work experience and then she went to work for the council (DS 42, 25 -29).

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY NETWORKS

The idea that community capacity might be built through listening to the needs of communities was rooted in the notion of building community networks, on the basis that by building connections with local dignitaries and businesses, it would be easier to meet the needs of these very diverse communities. Actors spoke about a having an extensive network or consortia of local contacts or across the private and third sector including local

schools, businesses, trades-people, and faith organizations which they relied upon for community information, funding and resources:

> "We created these networks that cover the whole of the city. There are ninety membership groups and they can vary from an allotment society to a social enterprise, a registered social landlord (RSL) and incorporate training companies (DS 48, 277 -280)

The idea was premised on drawing on the wide range of skills and resources available in order to meet community needs. For instance, one actor spoke of their involvement in a network consortium of VCS organizations and how this had helped to distribute funding from different sources across the city (DS18, 15). Another described their personal history of being involved in up to thirteen community networks which had led to a 'community action group' being formed, a church cafe, an adult learning centre; a community IT facility, and an after school club (DS48, 64). This ability to respond quickly to addressing emerging community need appeared to form part of the attraction of this discourse, in offering a degree of flexibility to be able to react quickly and creatively to complex needs. For instance, one actor spoke of their involvement in the renovation of an old building by drawing on local networks which they had successfully managed to turn it into accommodation for themselves and a social enterprise:

> "This was a hardware store full of pigeons but I needed accommodation myself, and admin staff and we used SRB funding to renovate the upstairs" (DS48, 23).

This ability to meet needs flexibly by drawing on such community networks extended to individuals who had become marginalized as a result of their physical or mental disability,

offering them an opportunity to re-engage with social life and volunteer or paid work. One volunteer spoke of her personal experience as a mental health service user who had suffered bi-polar disorder in the past and how, following a breakdown s/he had come to work at the VCS organization. Here s/he had met with others who had experienced similar mental health problems and had following a period of volunteering, had been able to secure paid work. Another actor in the same organization described the importance of such networks in helping people to regain a sense of self respect which people with mental and physical disabilities were perceived to have lost as a result of exclusion in the past. Here actors spoke of the huge benefits that could be brought by assisting people to mix with others in a similar position by sharing their stories:

> "It was really inspiring for me just to watch her and especially hearing her story and she said 'I was off work for years and, you know, had really bad anxiety and used to go out, walk outside and used to faint, and couldn't cope with being outside' and now she's here, supporting other clients with those kinds of issues" (DS 42, 1067 – 1069).

PLUGGING THE GAPS IN MAINSTREAM SERVICE PROVISION THROUGH DEVELOPMENT WORK

The idea that by building community capacity through community networks it was possible to plug gaps service provision, was premised on a perception about the failure of mainstream services to meet the real needs of communities because of a preoccupation with meeting government targets rather than real community need. One actor involved in the distribution of European funding to grass roots organizations, described how they seemingly worked differently to mainstream providers where instead of producing 'action plan after action plan', they would 'hear what groups wanted to do' (DS18, 100). Another

actor spoke of plugging a gap in older peoples' services by listening to what older people actually needed on discharge from hospital:

> "One of the things we did was create...the link line. The idea is that it was a proactive support service for the local elderly, visiting and linking with older people, discharge from hospital, helping them to attend appointments." (Community Activist, DS 48)

The area which actors most frequently referred to, were gaps in mainstream employment provision where agencies such as Job Centre Plus were considered tokenistic and not geared up to the 'real needs' of communities (DS18, DS42, DS48). One actor spoke of the inherent lack of sensitivity in mainstream providers to take account of individuals' particular physical, social or financial circumstances and how this might impact on their capacity to do certain types of work. Examples of this, included cases where providers were repeatedly unable to access funding to assist people in getting back to work because of a failure to fund specialist courses which would allow people the opportunity to train in another area of work. For instance, one actor shared their experience of one man wanted to re-train as a fireman but who couldn't afford the £2000 training fee (DS42, 142). They also described a man who had lost his job after twenty years, in the recession and who wanted to train as a locksmith but was unable to secure the funding to pay the £500 costs for the training course (DS42). Finally there was a man wanting to take HGV training but who was unable to afford the £1000 fee. This distinct failure to listen to the 'real needs' of communities was at the heart of this discursive communities desire to plug the gap in an attempt to respond to real need. For instance, in another example, a man was turned away at an employment fair because he didn't live in the right postcode area (272). Another man who had lost an arm in an

industrial accident and who 6 months later was being pursued by Job Centre Plus to return to work insisted on sending him to a post office sorting job, despite being informed by the VCS organization concerned that he was professionally trained and needed a higher salary to retain his home:

> "You can't timeline people. We had a man who was made redundant [who'd] worked in senior management. He went to the job centre and they said 'you need to put 3 careers down and he said well I've earned this salary and if I earn below that I'll lose my home and the job centre said, but you need to put down 3 – can you drive? Ok we'll put you down for a driving job'. He said I can't do a driving job, it won't pay enough. Within a week the JCP had sent him 3 driving jobs to apply for" (DS42, 126).

Another actor described how the VCS organization they worked for had become involved as a sub-contractor of a government approved 'National employment provider' to provide business start up support for those wishing to set up their own business (D18). But they noted how in reality, there was little interest in the courses they were asked to run and that people were only attending in order to satisfy the requirements for receiving their Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This experience was backed up by personal stories of job seekers who had allegedly had JSA monies withdrawn for failing to attend New Deal courses based on 'if we don't do our 30 hours, we don't get our money, so we're just here bored sick' (DS18, 141). More worryingly, in another example, an actor reported being told not to open any windows at a mainstream providers' job seekers course in case anyone should jump out (DS18, 146). Attempts by this discursive community to plug such gaps in mainstream service provision were based around recognizing the gaming that was going on and trying to offer more individually tailored support packages:

"I think a lot of the national providers look at the statistics and targets rather than the person and I will say that of a lot of the courses we run, but if someone's finished and want to come back, we never turn them away" (DS42, 111)

This same actor described their involvement in development work to clients with long term health issues and disabilities, assisting them back to work by offering physical and emotional support. This included providing virtual office administrative support for those wishing to set up their own business, to 1:1 coaching for confidence building, and social events for developing social skills and self worth:

"We had one client, a young girl, who'd had a severe car accident when she was 17...when she first came, she couldn't even look at anyone. 2 years later she left here after being on our voluntary group doing work experience and went onto work at the council" (DS 42, 25).

SECURING GRANT FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT WORK

The idea that gaps in need arose as a result of the way that mainstream services were organized meant that it was important for this discursive community to secure appropriate means of financing any development work to plug the gap. The aim here was to 'make the best use of money to improve the lives of people' (DS18, 10). There were various ways of securing such funding and actors spoke of drawing on a wide range of funding including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the Princes Trust (DS48, 56) the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) (DS18, 76). Such grants were used to fund a wide range of development work to improve facilities, access to support, training and childcare (DS18, 13). Another actor spoke of securing funds for service users

previously excluded from a European conference to allow them to visit and speak with MPs (DS42, 309). Another actor spoke about securing 'migrant funding' through the Local Strategic Partnership to address cultural differences which were being interpreted as anti-social behavior (DS48, 227). The idea of needing to be creative with the use of grants stemmed from both the short term nature of such funding and also problems pertaining to eligibility criteria where either the timings or criteria didn't match the funding that was available. For instance, one actor spoke of a crèche which they were supporting financially 'because they couldn't use their money' (DS48, 270). They described how they used the money from their own organization to gap fill funding in this case:

> "There's a crèche on the market that we funded because they couldn't use their money, so we'll use our money for something else, or we'll use your money for salaries next time, you can use our capital money. We've done these sorts of arrangements and they've worked very well" (DS48, 270).

CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS

One of the binding factors about actors in this discursive community from the other two was the high (but not exclusive) degree to which they were involved in activities which were largely funded through the voluntary sector and which they reported afforded them a high degree of autonomy and flexibility in terms of identifying and responding creatively to previously unmet need. However, despite actors' commitment to this ability to act flexibly, at the same time there was a perception that the VCS could not be trusted to take charge and manage the financial aspects of such developments. This set up a tension for actors who reported that despite being instrumental in surfacing needs, they often felt their hands were tied in responding fully to those needs because of constraints placed on them by

statutory agencies, either in terms of a lack of trust to manage regeneration programmes, or because of bureaucratic monitoring procedures imposed which restricted what it was possible to fund. This, coupled with a lack of sustainable funding in general, meant that actors in this discursive community often found it difficult to maintain the creative and flexible approach that made them so distinctive from other discursive communities.

LACK OF TRUST BY STATUTORY SECTOR TO DELIVER REGENERATION

A number of actors described how despite having often been instrumental in the early stages of identifying an unmet need (by drawing on their understanding of local need) and sourcing appropriate funding to meet that need (by drawing on their extensive community networks) when it came to making a decision about who might host any likely regeneration programme, the VCS were often not considered appropriate to take charge and deliver any regeneration activity (DS42, DS48, DS18). One actor spoke of an application they had made for some SRB monies on the basis of providing a comprehensive programme of local regeneration only to be told "we don't want a VCS group running an SRB programme – we'll run it ourselves" (DS48, 12). In another example, actors described their experience of a statutory community involvement structure being established despite there already being a long standing existing community network in place to perform this function (DS42, DS48).

> "When the LSP was created, the council was clear they…wanted to control it, so whereas ERDF finished, there could have been ready-made community forums, [instead] they tried to impose these [name of community involvement structure]" (DS48, 288).

Although the actors who shared this discourse took pride in being free from statutory chains in order to respond to needs flexibly, this was countered with the experience of control by those governing and overseeing their activity. In the main this referred to statutory sector who may have held a monitoring function as well as central government who might have a role in funding VCS activity. In the case of monitoring this meant that VCS organisations, despite their distinctness from the statutory sector were often subject to the same monitoring processes because of a need to demonstrate success, as this community activist describes in the context of being asked to report outcomes to statutory partners:

> "You've got to tell us. No we haven't got to bloody tell you...we deal with local statutory organisations who can't understand that we're not part of the city council. Well you know – you've got to do it – No we haven't!" DS48, Community Activist, West Midlands Region, 472)

There was a sense that despite being separate from statutory agencies like the Local Authorities, NHS, Police, the VCS were constrained by a similar need to account for their practice and impact through involvement with any partnerships. This also spilled into other areas of governance associated with the management of programme activities, such that statutory sector were able to control decision making about the nature and type of regeneration activity that was to take place:

> "Everything had to go through those...area managers and then when NDCs came, that was the same template that was used in [name of city]. So the VCS in [name of city] is very much allowed to be by [that] council" DS48, 494)

This lack of trust to provide services meant that it was difficult to respond to needs that had been identified:

> "I think if its money for [area] then it should be for [area] and they should trust the discretion of the local providers that they know where the problems lie. But what we don't like is funding streams that completely exclude other areas…" (DS 18, 194).

EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT

In seeking to understand how such tensions and contradictions are managed, as with previous discourses, Jacques Lacan's notions of the affective realm are once again brought to the fore. Here, Lacan suggests how actors might wish for an idealised future through objet petit a, enjoying the pleasure and pain of its possibility through jouissance, but which also remain distant from attaining a goal because of its ultimate impossibility or inherent lack through its fantasmic realm. In the narratives of this third discursive community, it was possible to identify examples of romantic investment in educating other sectors about the value of the VCS; jouissance was evident through complaints about public and private sector gaming in the form of performance targets; and fantasy was present in this discursive community's reference to building sustainability through social enterprises.

OBJET PETIT A: EDUCATING THE STATUTORY SECTOR

From the perspective of actors' object of desire, the force of discourse is bound up in actors' romantic notions that the only way to increase their role in service provision was through educating the statutory sector about their unique way of operating and inherent value base. Here there was a sense that the statutory didn't understand the nature of third sector business (DS48, 646); or what social enterprise was (DS42, 768) and there was a need to

educate the public and private sector about the value base and culture of the third sector which informed the VCS' unique way of operating. One actor spoke of the problems they has experienced in 'getting the other sectors to understand what the third sector business, if you like, could contribute to' (DS48, 646). Another questioned if private sector providers people really understood the value of VCS organisations:

> "So you get a lot of national providers winning contracts but they don't have the compassion that the VCS has' (DS42, 107).

There were also complaints about the lack of a level playing field between private and VCS providers and the assumptions that were made by different sectors about the capacity that was available in the VCS to make bids for potential contracts. For instance, one actor described how they had been asked if they had a 'team of bid writers' working on their applications when in reality it was often the manager of a VCS service making the application in their own time. Because of these misunderstandings, actors in this discursive community expressed a strong desire to inform other sectors of the high quality services provision on offer on the basis of their unique capacity to listen to communities and respond to individual need:

> "I think by giving the VCS a bigger role in service provision, or if it's a national provider, let them give their clients choice and I think why we're probably unique is we give clients their choice and ask them what they want to do and that route will give them a goal and [with] the voluntary group here, you know people talk to one another about what they want to do and there's nothing more inspiring than our self employed clients who are already employed" (DS42, 1019)

In terms of jouissance, the force of discourse is revealed through repeated complaints about the performance management systems used by government to monitor the progress of contracts (DS42) at the same time as distrusting the VCS to host and manage major forms of service provision (DS48). This was typified in frequent examples of national training providers who had been awarded government contracts (in preference to VCS providers) to supply job skills training but who were perceived to be 'robbing the system' (DS42, 919) by 'double counting' the numbers of people involved when their 'output' had actually been recorded elsewhere:

> "There's so many people [providers] robbing the system and there's so many
>
> fiddle[s] going on" (DS42, 909)

In one case, a national provider was perceived to be placing clients in temporary jobs internally on a minimum wage, just to achieve government targets in order that funds could be drawn down (DS42, 909). In another example, actors spoke of the way in which government contracts with national providers weren't sensitive enough to record which organisation had generated the output. So in this case, below, the VCS training provider was missed from the equation despite having provided all of the training. Inevitably this had the potential to have a knock on effect in terms of securing future funding:

> "A lot of main contractors will sub-contract with organisations so if you were a new
>
> client coming in and I was a main contractor and you told me you wanted whatever,
>
> I'd tick my box and send it to [name of VCS organisation]. We'd then do the whole
>
> training with you, send you back and the outcome would come there to the national

providers who's probably done nothing for you other than sign you up under the exit paperwork" (DS42, 204 - 210)

There was a sense here that the VCS were losing out 'big time' in terms of the VCS sector not being able to compete for contracts on the same scale and not receiving acknowledgement or financial recompense for receiving referrals on their behalf. Instead there was a sense that national providers were benefitting hugely from appearing to meet government targets for recruiting unemployed people, by receiving around £3000 per client, of which around £100 was paid to sub-contractors:

"There's a big underlying upset that local providers are losing out and can't bid for these contracts" (DS42, 246).

FANTASY: BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Investment in social enterprise appeared to offer actors in this discursive community a means of overcoming the difficulty they had experienced with securing long term funding from the statutory sector. There was talk here of joining forces with other VCS organisations in a sort of 'pan sub-regional' arrangement as a means of safety in numbers, as one actor noted 'the VCS are fighting for their own little piece of turf' (DS48, 507). On this basis, the development of social enterprises offered a greater sustainability by supplementing grant based income with the 'not-for-profit' income generated from developments.

"It's ground up and we're looking for a shift, having development in terms of assets for example; I'm talking to the local temple about sharing a building [and] getting

community development monies to do that. Mercedes Benz might want to use the top as offices, the parking space, rent it out for their vehicles" (DS48, 516)

There was a sense that by being creative about the types of developments sought, then long terms sustainability could be built and the sector could be more self sufficient in tackling inequality, by generating businesses that would last (DS48):

"These are the sorts of things that give you a surplus…then you don't have to go running for the big money. You've got some of your own capital and then you can go for a normal commercial loan and you've got a track record to prove it"

The irony here was that in pursuing private sector funding, VCS providers potentially ran the risk of losing the very thing that gave VCS provision its unique flexible and responsive character. The very thing which they complained that national providers lacked in their provision of employment support, and which had, in their opinion, led them into gaming, because of their drive to maximize profit over peoples' needs.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this doctoral research was to explore why, despite being an integral part of successive UK governments attempts to tackle deprivation for well over fifty years, the outcomes of regeneration remain so elusive (Lawless 1989, Wilks-Heeg 1996, Mossberger & Stoker 1997, Atkinson 2000a, Henderson & Raco 2007). After providing an overview of the nature of the urban problem in Chapter 2, based on New Labours' post 1997 policy intention that no-one should be disadvantaged by where they live (SEU 1998), it was suggested that debates about the overly rational basis of traditional policy analysis, have brought alternative explanations centre stage which assist in surfacing the 'implicit' rather than a 'literal' meaning of regeneration policy (Yanow 1995, Hofman 1995, Colebatch 2000). This formed the basis of discussion in Chapter 3 about the role that dominant ideologies play in the framing of urban policy problems in the context of shifting patterns of governance involving moves away from technocratic forms of government towards a more inclusive form of governance involving a wider range of actors (Bovaird & Loeffler 2003, Newman 2001). However, following debates about the normative nature of so called 'dominant ideologies', it was suggested that questions still remained about the reasons why ambiguity persisted in regeneration (see Chapter 3). This subsequently brought theories of discourse to the fore in examining the ontological nature of discourse as a result of asking whether discourse constitutes a 'single utterance' or 'the [entire] political and social world' (Howarth 2000, p6). In the wake of evidence showing contradictory goals involving the pursuit of economic growth at the same time as achieving quality of life (Jonas & Ward

2007, Raco 2005) Chapter 5 posited that in order to explore the ambiguous nature of regeneration, it was necessary to develop a more 'critical approach to policy analysis' which not only allowed the rules which shape and constrain discourse to be examined (Howarth 2000, Howath and Torfing 2005) but which also offered a means of exploring the ways in which actors make sense of these new forms of governance (Diamond and Liddle 2005). As previously discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, unlike that of more interpretive approaches to discourse analysis which seek to fix meaning through studying what actors say and do (through studying the symbolic artifacts such as language, object and acts), a critical approach was proposed based on a more anti-essentialist view of social reality in which discursive 'lack' emerges in place of a central bureaucratic figure (Torfing 2005). Here, in seeking to overcome many of the limitations of past Marxist, structuralist and post-structural explanations of discourse, Chapter 4 and 5 went on to present Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony in which it is suggested that actors respond to this crisis of lack through a process of articulation through the use of nodal points and floating signifiers which attempt to temporarily fix meaning. In keeping with the broader aims of this thesis to explore the reasons for persistent ambiguity in regeneration policy, it was therefore posited that such ambiguity had much less to do with the way that past policies had been framed and much more to do with the struggle for hegemony which arises in response to anti-essentialist and anti-foundational socio-political contexts which lack a central bureaucratic figure (Torfing 2005).

Thus, the planned research design for this doctoral research was premised on the work of Cederstrom and Spicer (2004), as a means of examining the following research questions:

RQ 1: To what extent are the symbolic aspects of regeneration policy representative of the contradictions and tensions identified in Laclau & Mouffe's notion of lack?

RQ2: To what extent are such contradictions and tensions constitutive of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) notion of lack rooted in hegemonic struggle

Based on the adoption of Cederstrom and Spicer's (2004) analytical framework, Chapter 6,7,8 and 9 went on to consider 'where there is lack in this discourse' by seeking key words which appeared to 'act as nodal points 'as a supreme justification for the way things work in the field'. Here evidence was shown that through the frequent reference by actors to the key words; 'city regions'; 'narrowing the gap' and 'community capacity building', each of the three discourses served as a temporary means of articulating their shared views about the goals of regeneration policy to tackle different forms of inequality. This was in spite of the many contradictions and tensions that were also present which subsequently sought to render these goals impossible. In keeping with the claims by Howarth (2000) about a methodological deficit which has arisen around the application of critical approaches and the need to consider the ontological basis of discourse, the discussion which now follows is two-fold in seeking to first examine the extent to which, ontologically speaking the ambiguity in regeneration policy is constituted as lack (RQ 1) and the likelihood that such lack is rooted in hegemonic struggle (RQ 2).

RQ 1: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE SYMBOLIC ASPECTS OF REGENERATION POLICY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS IDENTIFIED IN LACLAU & MOUFFES' NOTION OF LACK?

Findings from the empirical study showed that of the fifty actors interviewed, whilst it was possible to see the presence of 'shared views' about the urban problem, based on different

understandings of the causes of deprivation and how it should be tackled (Hajer 1993, Fischer and Forrester 1993, Rein & Schon 1993) the dual presence of contradictions and tensions *within* the discourses at the same time, indicate that, ontologically the discourses have a more negative character which are better explained through discursive lack. The presence of such tensions and contradictions within the narratives confirm that regeneration is constituted more by its absence (i.e. lack) than by its presence (in terms of symbolic artifacts) and suggest that policy is operating in a far more complex arena of governance that the extant literature on framing would suggest

By first examining the difference *between the discourses*, it is possible to describe the first discourse: 'city regions', in terms of a neo-liberal discourse in which deprivation was perceived in terms of tackling economic inequality though partnerships with the private sector to 'develop city regions' to create growth through competition. Here, regeneration was seen as the means of improving economic growth through inward investment; building aspiration and skills and encouraging entrepreneurial communities to form. Such an approach is reflected in New Labours' policy intentions to build *Sustainable Communities* (ODPM 2003) by 'encouraging people and businesses to stay in urban locations and attract new investors; open up new opportunities for housing and commercial development [and] enable higher levels of population density to be achieved' (Raco 2005, p332). Latterly, this was extended to achieving *Urban Renaissance* policy through 'well designed, compact cities and connected cities supporting a range of uses where people live, work, and enjoy leisure time' (Rogers 2005, p7). Such physical and economic approaches to the tackling the urban problem are reminiscent of neo-liberal approaches which emerged during the 1970's (Atkinson 2000). Of particular note here is the 1977 White paper Policy for the Inner Cities

(DoE 1977) which sought to 'improve the economic, physical and social environment in addition to finding a better balance between population shifts and the types of jobs available' (See Chapter 3, p67). This also echoes the approach advocated under the Inner Urban Areas Act (1978) which saw the formation of partnerships with the private sector to attract businesses to invest in inner city areas (See Chapter 3). At the time, such policies were said to pave the way for a neo-liberal approach in which the Thatcher administration saw the urban problem as 'an inherent failure of the welfare state, stimulating a need to introduce greater individual responsibility for welfare through introducing 'free market economics' (Mossberger & Stoker and Stoker 1997).

Similarly, by looking at the second discourse to emerge, the notion of 'narrowing the gap', seemingly offered a means of improving service provision through joint working to secure resources for public investment (floating signifier); by involving the community in service planning through needs assessment (floating signifier); and communicating progress as a means of demonstrating public accountability (floating signifier). Such an approach could arguably be described in terms of a *public services (or welfare) discourse* in which deprivation was perceived in terms of tackling inequalities in access to service provision though attempts to 'narrow the gap' (nodal point) in life expectancy and quality of life. This discourse is reflected in New Labours' *Neighbourhood Renewal policy* goals to reduce the gap between national measures for worklessness and crime, poor health, skills and housing in the 44 most deprived areas in its efforts to tackle deprivation, based on 'no-one [being] seriously disadvantaged by where they live' (SEU 1998, p8. Here, such policy intentions were premised on the assumption that 'since the challenges of deprivation vary from place to place, so we need locally determined solutions' (ODPM 2005a). The approach is not only

in keeping with a past 'public enterprise' approach to regeneration to tackle deprivation along spatial lines (through 'area-based' forms of service improvement) but also through attempts by public health to improve population health by tackling inequalities in health (WHO 2009, Graham and Kelly 2004). Fuller and Geddes (2008) show how the assumptions of Neighbourhood renewal are based on implicit assumptions that deprivation is caused by citizen pathologies and poor public services at the neighbourhood level rather than as a consequence of structural inequalities and how this translates into policy which seeks to narrow the gap between outcomes in deprived areas and the rest of the UK.

Finally, it could be argued that the third narrative around 'building community capacity' is in keeping with a *communitarian discourse* which placed a high value on adopting a needs-led approach to securing resources through building community networks. Here the urban problem was seen in terms of a failure to meet community needs through existing mainstream service provision, invoking a storyline about the requirement for development work to build community capacity (NP) by having a thorough understanding of the needs of deprived groups (FS) using networking to develop creative approaches to responding to need (FS) and securing suitable funding in the form of grants in order to plug gaps in service provision (FS). This discourse is in keeping with new Labours' notion of civil society which places a value on 'the importance of voluntary groups and good citizenship as a mechanism for establishing trust and maintaining democracy' (Richards and Smith 2003 p171, Raco 2007). It is also reminiscent of the past 'new localism' agenda brought in under the City Challenge programme which saw partnerships develop with the wider public, private and voluntary sector (See Chapter 3, p69).

In keeping with this idea about the differences *between* discourses, and surfacing the assumptions which underpin this, Deborah Stone (2001) discussed the important role of narrative as one of the features of symbols in policy showing how, implicit within each narrative exists a *'theory of control'* which attempts to provide some explanation for the course of events. She went on to suggest that this might take the form of a *'story of decline'* in which actors refer to the past and how things are working; a narrative about *'change being only an illusion'* which places an optimistic spin on things that are failing; or a narrative about helplessness and control in which she suggests that it is possible to find a way through the situation, perhaps by controlling risk factors; *a 'conspiracy theory'* storyline which attempts to cast aspersions about causation due to control being in the hands of a few; and finally, a *'victim blaming' storyline,* where the solutions are seen to rest in the hands of those affected (p137). Thus in attempting to make sense, interpretively of the 'theory of control' (Stone 2001) behind each of the 3 narratives, it is possible to ascertain a strong 'victim blaming' narrative in the first discourse in which blame is apparently being assigned to the individual for failing to take advantage of the economic opportunities on offer, thus leading to economic inequalities. Equally, it could be argued that the apparent shift towards a 'story of decline' in the second discourse (involving the failure of past regeneration schemes to provide high quality public services) implies that the only way to tackle inequalities in health is to improve access to public services. Finally, it could be argued that bound up in the third discourse about building community capacity, is a 'conspiracy theory' narrative, in which actors' seemingly re-cast concerns about social inequality into complaints about the repeated failure of mainstream services to understand

and listen to community needs because of an inherent misunderstanding of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

However, despite the apparent utility from an interpretive perspective in surfacing such taken for granted assumptions, this analysis does little to explain why ambiguity might exist in the first place. Instead, what a critical analysis provides is the acknowledgement of not just the multiple discourses which exist *between* different actors who share a common view about regeneration, but also the presence of multiple contradictions of tensions *within* each discourse. In keeping with a Laclavian analysis then, a critical approach has the power to potentially explain how these different ways of 'seeing and doing regeneration' are actually discursive formations which have been linked together relationally in the form of a nodal point and floating signifiers but which are prevented from reaching full identity (that is; be fixed or sutured) because of lack. Such political accounts of discourse open up a much wider debate about the nature of such contradictions and tensions and the role they might play in negating the outcomes of regeneration policy.

From this critical re-reading then, it is possible to observe that in the first discourse, despite advocating a need to stimulate local economic growth through inward investment, contradictions and tensions emerged in the discourse through developments appearing to stall in the recent economic recession due to a lack of available funding (contradiction 1). In addition, there was also doubt about the real capacity of private sector companies to invest in an area due to most of them having gone overseas, or indeed wanting to re-locate to a new area. This cast doubt on the strategy of the effectiveness of inward investment as a mean of improving the economic prosperity of an area. In addition to the retention of high earners and efforts to re-position cities in terms of promoting their various 'offers', there

was also evidence that local people weren't always able to access the new jobs that had been promised due to jobs not materialising in the way agencies had intended (Contradiction 2). Some of this had to do with agencies re-locating from another geographical area, bringing existing staff with them, however, there was also evidence that where an organisation did require new labour, there was a often mismatch between the types of skills held by local population and those required by incoming industry. Hence, from this more critical perspective, despite the intention of regeneration to create economic opportunities that communities could take advantage of, there was also evidence that deprived communities were actually hindered from doing so (ironically) because of a lack of opportunity pertaining to their socioeconomic position (contradiction 3).

Similarly, in the second discourse, it is possible to observe that despite a strong commitment to improving the provision of public services, tensions were also seen to arise through a failure to coordinate service planning (contradiction 1) across a range of policy initiatives, resulting in the duplication of existing services and the wasting of resources. One actor in particular described how the introduction of a national government initiative led them to create 8 new community involvement structures to cover the whole city, despite already having a functioning involvement structure in place (DS10). This failure to coordinate service provision resulted in a failure to communicate progress of service developments (contradiction 2). Ironically, such duplication and lack of coordination appeared to have the opposite of its desired effect to reduce inequality by socially excluding residents from the opportunity to participate in activities which would otherwise improve their health.

In the third and final discourse, despite a strong commitment to a flexible 'needs-led' approach to creatively 'plug the gaps' in existing mainstream service provision, tensions

emerged in the form of a lack of autonomy surrounding the nature and scale of development work because of a lack of trust on the part of the statutory sector (contradiction 1). Tensions also arose in response to the 'monitoring functions' of statutory sector organisations which were seen to hold wider accountability functions for the success of service provision to central government (contradiction 2). This meant that, despite the perceived independence and autonomy of actors in this discursive community to respond flexibly to community need, in reality, there was often an expectation that they would be subject to the same degree of performance management of statutory agencies. This perceived lack of autonomy, often magnified through wider involvement in partnerships with public sector providers, was seen to spill over into other areas of local governance associated with the management of programme activities and the involvement of local people. As a result, despite the claims of independence and flexibility of this discursive community, they were frequently limited in the amount of autonomy they actually experienced.

Critical geographers have identified similar contradictions and tensions in the literature, on the basis that strategies to stimulate economic growth also have a tendency to create social, economic and health inequalities. Geddes and Fuller (2008) talk about the unintended effects of New Deal for Communities (NDC) policy to provide a housing re-development scheme which in reality would see an actual reduction in social housing and in increase in private housing along with the 'dumping of residents' into areas of the city where there is poor housing (p274). In the case of Urban Renaissance, the founding architect himself, Lord Rogers expressed concern years later that instead of 'bringing diverse people together to offer shared spaces and experiences and amenities such as parks, libraries, schools and

transport' huge problems remained in terms of middle class flight and inequalities in access to affordable housing (Rogers 2005, p3). Widening this to the empirical observation in the study that communities 'fail to take advantage of the economic opportunities on offer' (contradiction 3), it is possible to see how despite the intention of cities to seek to build growth through developing an 'outward looking stance' and 'fostering entrepreneurial cultures', it can at the same time, exacerbate inequity within the city (Diamond & Southern (2006, p189). Such claims rest on the empirical observations by Atkinson & Kintrea (2001) that in failing to see the source of poverty outside of a neighbourhood context, the effectiveness of policy to tackle worklessness in the local population is restricted to the level of employer assumptions that if the workforce in an area is 'not up to the job' then they may well seek to recruit elsewhere (Kleinman & Whitehead 1999 p82).

In keeping with evidence in the study pertaining to a lack of strategy associated with community involvement in service planning, Fuller and Geddes (2008) highlight a similar situation in which community empowerment structures duplicate existing networks (p272); and where communities are given little time, funding or support to develop skills necessary to engage with the NDC or in the case of LSP, trace the involvement from the Community Empowerment Networks (CEN) in LSP decision making. This is clearly demonstrated in the second discourse 'narrowing the gap' in the form of floating signifiers associated with community involvement and needs assessment. Such discursive practices are reflective of attempts to consult with the public as consumers of services (i.e. as parents, tenants, patients etc) in recognition of the so called 'negotiated space' which now exists between government and the public. However, as findings from the study showed, this desire to involve the public also resulted in complaints about a lack of strategy associated with the

duplication of several community involvement networks the subsequent waste of apparently scarce resources.   This was coupled with problematic feedback and accountability mechanisms to the public which subsequently restricted communication about improvements to any service provision that was being planned. In the second discourse, tensions surrounding the democratic accountability aspects of regeneration are also discussed.   This failure to adequately coordinate and communicate the progress of service developments which subsequently excludes residents from the opportunity to participate in activities which would otherwise improve their health was noted in Parry et al's (2004) work around NDC's. Noting how, in her study of NDC's, the intention for Community Participation to lead to an increased consciousness of the communities' socio-economic circumstances are based on observations in the field rather than empirical evidence, she suggests that the tensions arise out of an over committed faith in community participation 'as an intuitively good thing' (p501). In keeping with an interpretive approach, then Parry et al (2004) concludes that Community Participation is a highly complex activity involving hard to reach groups as well as usual suspects at a micro level to achieve macro-level structural change (Parry et al 2004, p502). In the broader policy sciences, ideas about the symbolic nature of community involvement in decision making were highlighted by Brannan, John and Stoker (2006) where participation is shown to be both a means and an end, which has resonance with the electorate but achieves little else by way of outcome. Consequently they suggest that any benefits in terms of empowerment, a sense of community and increased social action remain an assumption (Parry et al 2004, Thomson et al 2006).

In the third discourse, the idea that doubt could be cast about the effectiveness of 'community capacity building' to tackle wider social inequality, has been widely discussed in the public health literature in reference to the 'victim blaming nature' of economic approaches to health promotion approaches (Tones and Tilford 1994). Indeed, one of the primary critiques in public health is that in striving for a community empowerment approach, traditional approaches to public health have traditionally focused on individual empowerment through healthy lifestyle change rather than the community empowerment the implied critical consciousness raising (CCR) inspired by Paulo Friere (Tones and Tilford 1994). This is reflected in wider public health debates over the real meaning of 'inequality' where it is implied that the reluctance to address real differences in social relations (or social gradient) as reflected in an individuals' social status or socioeconomic position, means that policy efforts to tackle health inequalities remain somewhat 'tokenistic' (Hunter and Killoran 2004).

In exploring this idea of lack further, there is much evidence in critical geography to suggest that 'contradictions and tensions' offer a more explanatory purpose for the inherent lack in discourse than any debate about the symbolic aspects of regeneration. For instance, in describing city-regions as 'the sites of exchange, innovation, development and competition, Jonas and Ward 2007 (p2121) note the competing and contradictory role that economic development is expected to play at the same time as achieving quality of life. McCann (2007) articulates this shift towards regional competitiveness in the context of debates about the extent to which 'maintaining economic competitiveness' at the same time as achieving livability (quality of life) are mutually compatible in terms of value base (p188). Taking this contradictory idea further, Hughes (2009) notes the contradictory role of cities in

acting as both sites of creativity as well as sites of decay (p167). He also notes the city's broader role in acting as 'condensed sites for contemporary global flows' and also as a reflection of the 'localization of the global' and where 'the work of globalisation gets done'. This analysis brings Hughes (2009) to conclude that the expressions of social inequalities in cities are an expression of the spatial problems which exist in the form of clashes about 'urban glamour zones' and 'urban war zones' (p168) and suggests that tensions arise as a result of desires to 'cleanse the city of anything antisocial' (such as immigrants, the poor and unemployed).

However despite the valuable contributions brought by critical geography in surfacing the implicitly contradictory nature of contemporary approaches to improving economic growth, implicit within much of this and other work are rather hidden ontological assumptions about the nature of social reality. Indeed, Howarth & Torfing (2005) suggest that in pursuing potential explanations for such lack, it is necessary to deconstruct discourse to consider its underpinning logic in terms of cause and effect. In keeping with the discussion in Chapter 4, this is imperative because it determines, politically the rules which shape and constrain discourse (Hansen and Sorenson 2005). For instance, although Hughes (2009) notes the contradictory role of cities in acting as both sites of creativity as well as sites of decay (p167). He also notes the city's broader role in acting as 'condensed sites for contemporary global flows' and also as a reflection of the 'localization of the global' and where 'the work of globalisation gets done'. Hence despite this helpful contribution, by adopting a critical realist perspective, what Hughes discussion fundamentally hides are rather 'fixed' understandings about the nature of globalisation in terms of its evidence through generative mechanisms. Similarly, despite Fuller and Geddes (2008) valuable work to

surface the contradictions and tensions associated with NDC's, in making the observations that 'the poorest areas often receive the poorest public services' and claiming that the reason for limited impact is due to structural problems in neighbourhoods due to a 'failure to fully join up services across urban areas' implies that they are working from implicitly institutional assumptions. Indeed, a closer read of their paper points to a clue here, in that they discuss Governments linking of Neighbourhood Renewal Policy to the modernisation of public services. This would suggest that any attempt to ameliorate the ill-effects of any 'neo-liberalist' policies would be met with difficulty because of the failure of such approaches to consider the complex socio-political context in which regeneration policy is now operating.

Such ontological debates about the 'real meaning of regeneration' takes the debate about the symbolic nature of urban policy in another direction, subsequently bringing into question the capacity of so called 'theories of framing' and bringing to the fore, potential explanations of lack described by Laclau & Mouffe (2001). Such observations chime with the suggestion by some, that the limitations of viewing the tensions and contradictions from this rather limiting new-institutionalist perspective of framing highlights the importance of the political context in ascertaining *why* some of these contradictions and tensions occur. Of particular note here, is the review by Jonas and Ward (2007) who have observed how the tensions and contradictions which appear in policy discourse represent an area which has been largely under-theorised. They base their critique on the persistence of multiple meanings in the literature associated with the policy term 'city regions' including its functionalist role in supporting traders in the production of commodities and services. Based on such critique, Jonas and Ward (2007) observe how this rather functionalist version

of city regions, which alludes to a so called 're-scaling' of state space, has shifted the reproduction of social life away from 'nation states' towards 'city states' but declines to explore what might be driving such shifts in governance, as the quote below suggests:

> "The new city regionalism takes forward into the 21st century, a well established debate about the democratic and administrative roles of the city state (which now replaces or flanks the nation-state). Instead we want to argue for an analysis that understands the political and social construction of the city region as an integral component in the wider re-scaling of states, not an input or an output but part of the process and politics of state re-territorialization" (Jonas and Ward 2007, p172).

Linking this back to the empirical findings in this research, although the presence of contradictions and tensions within the empirical data discourses confirms the negative character or absence of discourse, there is still a need to confirm the extent to which this constitutes the 'lack' described by Laclau & Mouffe (2001). Indeed, this was a key question posed by a critical theorist peer, in a recent paper presentation to the 6th ECPR International conference in August 2011, in which he asked: 'to what extent is suck lack merely representative of an absence of debate within the discourse/ narrative or more constitutive of the hegemonic lack posed by Laclau & Mouffe (2001)?' To answer this fully we must turn to the second research question which seeks to explore the notion of lack in more detail. With this, the discussion now turns to an examination of the ontological nature the lack which emerged, on the basis of exploring the findings from two important aspects, theoretical and political. In exploring the first concern, the importance of ascertaining the ontological nature of lack makes it is possible to expose the 'causal links' being assumed (Reyes 2005 In: Howarth & Torfing 2005, p248). In exploring the second concern to make

sense 'politically' of the way on which context affects *what it is possible to say and do* in discourse, assists not only in making explicit 'who' and 'what' is excluded from the policy debate, but also about the possibilities and conditions for change in tackling deprivation in the future and the policy implications implied here.

RQ2: To what extent are such contradictions and tensions constitutive of Laclau & Mouffe's notion of lack rooted in hegemonic struggle?

On the basis that the multiple discourses were seen to emerge in the data, each with their contradictions and tensions, confirms that regeneration policy is less defined by its symbolic nature and more constitutive of a negative character or absence in discourse, otherwise known as 'lack'. However in the face of debates about the ontology of lack, it is necessary to assess the assumptions underpinning governance processes explicitly in terms of their ontological status and what it is possible to assume. For instance, in their chapter on 'Polity as Politics' (In: Howarth & Torfing 2005), Hansen and Sorrenson (2005) show how neo-institutionalist perspectives such as that of March & Olsen (1995) are limited by their constructivist underpinnings because of the 'fixed' way in which institutions are viewed in shaping the behaviour of actors (p95).

This is backed up by Howarth (2000) who, in applying discourse theory as a method, points out the importance of distinguishing methodological concerns from their epistemological underpinnings and propose 'problematisation' as an 'problem driven approach' (p318). Such approaches take as its starting point, not particular methods (such as survey research); or the need to confirm a particular theoretical perspective (such as realist research); but one

which offers a set of tools to analyse 'what is going on in the world' (p318) by examining the rules which structure and 'condition the particular elements of the discourse'. Unlike that of interpretive approaches to discourse analysis then, Howarth suggests that such problematisation allows a 'second level interpretation' to be conducted beyond that of the actors own interpretation in which the ontological underpinnings can be assessed using a hermeneutic approach. As previously discussed in Chapter 5, this is perhaps most usefully illustrated by Eileen Honan and colleagues in their assessment of the different accounts of Hannah's identity that it is possible to surface, depending on which ontological approach is applied (Honan et al 2000). As a result, Howarth (2000) suggests that any 'new facts' as such must be 'situated within their wider fields of social meaning' along with their ontological assumptions and socio-political context.

Linking this back into the aims of this thesis, we can say that the ontological assumption underpinning this research was that of an 'anti-essentialist' and 'anti-foundationalist' stance where there is no pre-existing structure which determines social identity nor is such evidence based on God or Nature (Torfing 2005, p13). Accordingly, in considering whether any notions of lack identified in the empirical data are constitutive of hegemony then, it is necessary to consider whether such lack arises out of the 'giving up' of this, so called transcendental centre' and the extent to which the process of articulation becomes prominent in the way that it attempts to stand in for that lack. This involves looking for instances where nodal points seemingly act as 'anchors' or signifiers to that meaning and in which floating signifiers (or organizing metaphors as Hansen and Sorenson (2005) describe them); seek to 'partially fix' it (Torfing 2005, p13).

This idea that contemporary discourses in regeneration policy are more constitutive of the contradictions and tensions found in lack, challenges the extant literature on framing (Rein & Schon 1993, Fischer 1993, Forrester 1993, Hajer 1993).   It also challenge Stones (1989) suggestion that such framing involves 'fixed' processes of 'image making where beliefs about blame, cause and responsibility are attributed by those in power in order to legitimize a particular course of action' and the suggestion by Wilks-Heeg (1996) and Atkinson (2000) that the way that an issue is perceived as a problem is dependent upon the way that issues are defined within differing material, political and ideological contexts (Wilks-Heeg 1996, Atkinson 2000).   On the basis of such findings, and in keeping with the aims of this thesis, this confirms that the ambiguity which emerges in regeneration policy, in this case, is not so much defined by past political and ideological contexts in the form of higher level discourses or dominant ideologies, but instead articulated in a temporary way, depending on the context at the time.   This is most explicitly demonstrated in Atkinson's (2000) description of framing and the way that narratives constrain particular ways of understanding the problem by 'fixing meaning' in a certain way:

> "Narratives attempt to project a particular version of reality, seeking to organize it in a certain manner while simultaneously attempting to mask or deny contradictions within that reality and limit our perception of such contradictions – *a form of closure* or what is termed a strategy of containment" (Atkinson 2000, p:213 emphasis added).

That 'city regions' can be described as a neo-liberal discourse has been contested and is in keeping with the findings of Fuller and Geddes (2003) and Raco (2005) who have each argued that as a concept, neo-liberalism is a highly complex, diverse and contested term

whose meaning has repeatedly shifted over time (Fuller & Geddes 2008, p255). Raco (2005, p328) shows how the meaning in the 1970/ 80's (in response to tackling the ills of Keynesianism) shifted from a period of 'rolling-back' the state apparatus, to a period of 'rolling out' in which a more 'purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberal state forms, modes of governance and regulatory mechanisms' were instigated (Peck & Tickell 2002, p37 In: Raco 2005). As Raco notes, both of these differences in meaning are reflected in historical shifts away from the 'classical liberalism' alluded to by Harvey (2006) involving the 'primacy of private property', free choice, a 'nightwatchman role for the state' and the alleged 'intrusion of the state into private choice' (Jessop 2002, p108 In: Raco 2005). Indeed, a similar effect can be witnessed with the second discourse where, despite a proposed shift having taken place away from neoliberal ideologies involving Thatcher's denial of poverty through the well known maxim; 'there is no such thing as society' toward a third way ideology introducing notions of social justice, there is evidence of the continuation of a strong neo-liberal element too, New Labour continued to maintain a focus on a neo-liberal agenda by seeking to extend neo-liberalist ideas by instilling policy with a competitiveness agenda.

Such a proposition thus poses a major challenge, not only to the extant literature on framing which suggests that past interpretations of the urban problem have been framed according to dominant neo-liberal, welfare and communitarian ways of seeing (Wilks-Heeg 1996, Atkinson 2000a), but it also introduces a new dimension to the more recent literature to emerge in critical geography which suggests that the contradictions and tensions are a direct response to neo-liberal policies (Fuller and Geddes 2008). Based on Torfing's (2005) account then, lack can be seen to emerge as a result of the different debates which have to

take place in the form of struggle, as a result of the tensions which arise (Torfing 2005, Laclau & Mouffe (2001). This finding chimes significantly with the suggestion by Hansen and Sorenson (2005) that discursive polity is not only about the different 'meanings that actors attach to them', but it is in direct response to a well documented shift away from technocratic systems of government involving 'vertical chains of command involving legislative, administrative, executive and administrative powers' (p94); towards more horizontal forms of governance with its 'networks involving a multitude of actors' all of which are indicative of a general 'de-centralising and globalizing of the political which challenges sovereign notions of nation state rule' (p94).

Relating this to Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of hegemony, what Hansen and Sorenson (2005) suggest this implies, is that the nation state has lost its hegemonic rule and how in doing so, the ground is opened up in terms of struggle in the 'battle for hegemony' (p95). Going further, they argue that where Laclau & Mouffes' (2001) offer is strongest is in its potential to explain how the possibility for dislocation is created when the dominant meaning collapses, and in which new and emergent struggles compete for hegemony (power), and which continues until one wins, and becomes structured (albeit temporarily) around a floating signifier.

In the face of such contradictory goals, 'regeneration' itself emerges as a dominant signifier' based on its articulation around different forms of enterprise, which are each rooted in 'new right' tendencies in which the primacy of the market comes to the fore. This implies that a new social order has emerged to replace any previous dominant ideology which is not subordinate to one dominant power, but to a whole host of new social movements such as gender, sexuality, ethnic background which Laclau & Mouffe (2001) argue have emerged in

the form of different struggles, each in response to a general commodification of all areas of

social life including work, leisure, health. Laclau & Mouffe (2001) discuss how the state has

intervened to provide these new 'needs' because they are no longer provided for by the

traditional community networks, which capitalism has destroyed (p161) but that because of

this there has been a rise in bureaucracy and a merging of the public with the private in an

attempt to counter this. This is reflected in narratives across all three discourses who each

report bureaucratic interference from central government in the form of performance

management (DC 1); public accountability (DC 2) and a lack of autonomy.

For instance, in surfacing some of the force behind this discourse then, as an object of

desire, actors in the empirical data invested in attempts to raise the aspirations of young

people who they saw as being 'trapped in a cycle of poverty' because of generations of

unemployment (Objet petit a). Jouissance emerged in the form of complaints about the

bureaucratic nature of public sector organisations (jouissance).   One Director of

Regeneration noted a clash of values between the private and public sector in terms of the

pace of change and the delays this cause in terms of planning, as a result of waiting draw

down funds (i.e. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund – sitting around in deckchairs DS 30).

Fantasy arose through a nostalgic belief that despite evidence of the inherent tensions

associated with building competitive city regions (i.e. in short, that investment doesn't

always lead to growth).

In managing tensions in the second discourse, there were romantic notions here of the need

to demonstrate financial probity to government. Here, actors frequent reference to the

importance of 'lines of accountability' to Central and Regional Government departments

and the Local Authority as accountable body seemed to be rooted in a desire to

demonstrate success to the electorate. In terms of Jouissance, actors frequently talked about the 'pain' of ongoing competition to secure resources from central government in tandem with the 'pleasure' of successful bids. Here, success was seen in terms of 'getting large chunks of money onto the estate' even though in reality this often only represented a fraction of mainstream spending. At the heart of fantasmic elements in this discourse was an irrational belief that despite the difficulties associated with a lack of strategy; a lack of community involvement and a failure to communicate new services coming on stream, better brokering between service providers would overcome difficulties. Emotionally, actors in this discourse saw themselves at the coalface with the capacity to offer practical help to improve joint working between partners.

In the third discourse, actors held romantic notions that the only way to increase their role in service provision was through educating the statutory sector about their unique way of operating and inherent value base. Here there was a sense that the statutory didn't understand the nature of third sector business (DS48, 646); or what social enterprise was (DS42, 768). In terms of jouissance, again the force of discourse is revealed through repeated complaints about the lack of rigour in the government's monitoring of performance related targets. This was typified in frequent examples of national training providers who had been awarded government contracts (in preference to VCS providers) to supply job skills training but who were perceived to be 'robbing the system' (DS42, 919) by 'double counting' the numbers of people involved when their 'output' had been recorded elsewhere. There was also talk here of gaming, whereby one national provider was perceived to be placing clients in temporary jobs internally on a minimum wage, just to achieve government targets in order that funds could be drawn down (DS42, 909). In spite

of the difficulty, there was a sense that if long terms sustainability could be built, the sector could be more self sufficient in tackling inequality, by generating businesses that would last (DS48).

By viewing the affective realm in this more critical way, it is possible to see how in coping with the complexities of regeneration, actors draw on a number of resources. Across all three discourses, these may include nostalgic return to the 'good old days'; that is pre-recession, pre-globalisation times when employment was high ('Objet petit a'), acknowledgement of their struggles over a lack of resources ('Jouissance') and promulgating the benefits that can be brought about by working together, either through partnership; better joined up working; or building better community networks ('fantasy'). This speaks to requests to better understand how actors cope with the complexities brought by shifting patterns of governance (Diamond & Liddle 2005).

Taking this further, Laclau's theory surrounding an articulation of lack suggests that the chains of equivalence which form around nodal points can be subsumed into a general 'logic of equivalence'. Howarth (2000) describes how such a process might function in his critical observation of the black social movement in South Africa which, despite their differences, mobilized to form a common front in the fight against apartheid. In the case of this empirical data, this would suggests that there would be much to gain in actors from each discursive community coming together to address issues of democratic accountability. Not least because of the second third discourses' involvement with the creation of local governance structures and the attention given to hard to reach groups, respectively. Based on readings of Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony then, it would be possible for actors from each of the discourses to come together to form a general logic of

equivalence which responds to the many shared bureaucratic struggles which arise as a result of new right hegemony.   This is in keeping with Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) idea about the political value of this unfixed and temporary nature of discourse which can be re-articulated at any given time.

For instance, Laclau & Mouffe (2001) note how the new right chain of equivalence is not in itself a bad thing, it is merely its requirement to be the only discourse, and at the expense of all others that makes it hegemonic. As such Laclau & Mouffe (2001) ask if it is not possible to 'renegotiate' some of these demands, in achieving a 'win-win' scenario between all of the discourses. From this more political take on discourse, this highlights the importance of overcoming the ills of the market through efforts to re-articulate the meaning of social reality. From the perspective of ambiguity in regeneration policy, this suggests that in the context of highly complex policy which is ultimately hegemonic in nature, there is a tendency for actors to seek to manage such complexity through irrational (rather than rational) means. This rescinds any rational or cognitive explanations for ambiguity in policy, and brings to the fore, more irrational processes of meaning making, through emotional investment and their romantic and fantasmic roots.

In its entirety, through this apparent 'merging of regeneration practices', lays the implicit suggestion of the presence of hegemony, on the basis that 'new right' ideas persist in influencing and shaping every aspect of regeneration practice. In keeping with the aims of this thesis to explore the reasons for persistent ambiguity from a more critical (post-structural) perspective and examine how actors seek to manage this, means that there are implications here around what it means to perform 'good practice' in regeneration, in addition to 'policy implementation' research. This suggests that there is scope for academia

to work more closely with policy makers and practitioners in the design, management and delivery and urban development, by raising awareness of the hegemonic nature of regeneration; its constitution as lack in policy discourse and the potential for actors to mobilise collectively in responding to the challenges brought by a new right hegemony.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSIONS

This research sought to examine the long-held claim that the persistent failure of regeneration to tackle the root causes of deprivation was largely due to a lack of knowledge of what works (Thomson et al 2006, Parry et al 2004) and the result of highly symbolic policy which sought to frame the way that policy problems were understood (Atkinson 2000, Wilks-Heeg 1996). In response, it is suggested that the different explanations which exist about the causes of the urban problem are constitutive of broader debates in the social sciences about the nature of knowledge, which can only be explored by taking account of the ontological assumptions which underpin discourse. Drawing, first on idealist approaches to discourse theory and latterly more critical ones, the research shows how questions about 'what works' in regeneration can be linked to empiricist methods of enquiry which rely on overly-rational claims about the objective way in which knowledge is formed, thereby ignoring the public democratic voice. This same problem when viewed through a more interpretive lens not only suggests that the urban problem arises out of normative assumptions about 'what works', it can also be linked to more constructivist modes of enquiry which rely on idealist claims that there are different ways of framing the debate based on competing investment in higher level discourses (or ideologies), something which is increasingly being challenged (Fuller & Geddes 2008, Raco 2005). This brings into focus the possibility of a more negative form of discourse at play in urban policy, based on a more contingent (unfixed) and anti-essentialist (not rooted in any pre-given structure) understanding of the nature of social reality.

As a result, it is argued in this thesis that the ambiguity that arises as a result of unintended consequences and symbolic policy, has less to do with the way regeneration policy has been framed according to past Neo-liberal, Keynesian and Third Way ideology, and more to do with the hegemonic nature of urban policy which brings new-right market based ways of seeing and doing to every aspect of regeneration practice. This suggests that instead of responding to the interpretive call to 'decipher' the goals of regeneration (Atkinson 2000), we should seek to 'deconstruct' the goals of regeneration to examine the nature of the rules at play and the way they might shape and constrain what is possible. By means of providing evidence to this effect, this thesis sought to operationalise a critical approach to the analysis of regeneration policy drawing on Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony. Here, it is argued that by drawing on critiques of structuralist, Marxist and Post-structuralist approaches to discourse, the theory allows not only the antagonisms which arise in regeneration policy to be surfaced, but also the political subjectivity of the players involved to be scrutinised, along with their potential for agency in responding to such hegemony through struggle.

The empirical research comprised evidence presented in the form of three 'discourses of regeneration' which showed how frequent reference to a *'city regions'* storyline (in the first discourse) echoed the attempts of past governments to institute 'neo-liberal' policies as a means of improving growth through physical and economic approaches, such as inward investment, job creation and the building of entrepreneurial communities. Equally, in the second discourse there was clear reference to a 'Keynesian' approach through actors' investment in Welfarist policies to *'narrowing the gap'* through efforts to improve residents' access to service provision. Finally, in the third discourse a strong commitment to

'Communitarian' values could be witnessed in actors' attempts to identify and reach hard to reach groups perceived to be excluded from regeneration, including amongst others, BME, traveller and migrant communities through *'capacity building'* approaches. However the dual presence of numerous contradictions and tensions associated with these different ideological approaches, namely in the form a lack of growth, a lack of access to service provision and a lack of capacity, served only to negate these goals and in doing so, implied that there may be a more negative form of discourse at play.

As the discussion sought to demonstrate, although this observation was in line with the claim of Atkinson (2000) & Wilks-Heeg (1996) about the highly symbolic and circular nature of urban policy, based on successive governments' tendency to draw on the same solutions despite because of the influence of a dominant or higher level discourse, there were some important assumptions worthy of being unpicked here, not least because of their potential to also predict a particular course of action (Stone 2002). Hence, the discussion went on to show that by being rooted in so called 'theories of framing', not only were such discourses essentially 'idealist' in their perspectives about the nature of social reality, but from what we already know of broader debates within sociology, they also privilege the cognitive aspects of 'the social' (social reality) whilst ignoring any socio-political context, by seeking evidence about the way that actors make sense of the world around them through the use of stories. Epistemologically this amounts to merely observing how actors 'think, act' and 'interact' with each other (otherwise known as inter-subjectivity) by examining the moral stories they tell themselves about 'what's right and wrong' based on investment in a particular 'higher level discourse' or dominant ideology (Forrester 1993). But what is

ignored here is an assessment of the socio-political factors which shape and constrain what it is possible to say and do in different contexts.

In assessing the implications of such findings in the context of broader sociological debate, what was in question here, was not so much the capacity of multiple meanings or discourses to exist in policy, but the extent to which the narratives or stories embedded within them were being driven by higher level discourses. This specifically referred to Stone's (1989) earlier claim about the way that policy problems are framed (see Chapter 3) on the basis that "problem definition is a process of image making where images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame and responsibility"(Stone 1989, cited in: Atkinson 2000, p214).   Indeed it was shown that growing doubt had been cast through an increased focus by critical geographers on the overly normative nature of such higher level discourses or dominant ideologies. For instance, Fuller and Geddes (2008) showed how the term 'neo-liberalism' had shifted significantly over time. This was backed up by Raco (2005) who demonstrated that ideas about neo-liberalism were far from fixed but instead were dependent upon context, time and space. In keeping with this idea, Raco (2005) went on to show how, in response to a crisis of Keynesiansism in the 1970s, what actually existed was a 'rolling-back' of neo-liberalism (through its attack on the welfare state), and how later this shifted to a more 'rolled-out' form (in recognition of the changes required to existing governance structures). This he suggested was quite different from the classical view of neo-liberalism described by David Harvey involving 'a night-watchman' role for the state' (Harvey 2006 In: Jessop 2002, p108).

By drawing on Laclau & Mouffes' (2001) theory of socialist hegemony and based on a more critical interpretation of the data, it was suggested that despite taking a supposedly neo-

liberal view in the first discourse; a Keynesian view in the second and a Communitarian view in the third; calls to tackle deprivation could all be witnessed in actors' articulation of deprivation (around different forms of inequality) and regeneration (around different forms of enterprise). This, coupled with the compelling evidence of actors' different forms of emotional investment in some practices over and above others, demonstrated the highly discursive nature of regeneration and its temporary articulation which Laclau and Mouffe (2001) suggested arose out of the emergence of a new-right hegemony in the form of bureaucratic struggles and a merging of the public with the private in an attempt to counter this. Taking this idea further, Hansen and Sorenson (2005, p95) suggested that through the collapse of the dominant meaning, there was potential for new 'battles for hegemony' to begin, opening up the ground for new and emergent struggles (albeit temporarily), through a process of re-articulation.

In keeping with this more negative form of discourse, where regeneration is seen to behave as an 'empty signifier' rather than any fixed or stable understanding of policy, this implied the need to be realistic about the capacity of regeneration in its current form to achieve the goals it sets for itself in tackling deprivation. Instead it called for a re-articulation of 'regeneration policy' based on the temporary coalescing of all the actors involved, around a common goal that is tackling the different forms of inequality. This suggested that a more honest dialogue was required between the discursive communities, both about the bureaucratic nature of tensions which arise by mobilizing its actors to form the basis of one of any 'new social movements' which have the power to challenge new right hegemony by merging their 'logics of difference' to form a 'logic of equivalence' based on their shared objectives to tackle all forms of inequality. This highlights the potential of critical

approaches to building capacity for regeneration through not only attending to the cognitive

ways in which actors interpret policy but also the social and political context in which policy

decision making takes place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Methodologically, in exploring the persistence of ambiguity in regeneration policy highlight the limitations of methodological approaches which seek to surface the 'unintended consequences of regeneration' and describe the 'symbolic policy' that is produced, on the basis that when considered within its broader socio-political context; 'contradictions and tensions' offer a more critical explanation of why ambiguity occurs.

- In making sense of ambiguity in regeneration policy, encourage the need for policy makers to make sense 'politically' of the contradictions and tensions by promoting the utility of applying critical approaches to policy analysis, in surfacing the 'tensions and contradictions' of policy on the basis that in the context of shifting patterns of governance, regeneration policy discourse is more constitutive of discursive lack;

- In ascertaining a cause for ambiguity in policy, acknowledge the limitations of relying on past notions of framing of the urban problem on the basis that contemporary urban problems exist in an increasingly complex terrain, not only involving a wide range of actors and their different ideas about how deprivation should be tackled but that this is constrained by hegemonic influences associated with globalisation;

- In practitioners and policy makers, highlight the need for more open and honest dialogue both *within and between the discour*ses about the 'types of outcomes' that it is possible to produce from regeneration given its known contradictions and

tensions, and the limited conditions for change within a structural/ institutional context;

- Acknowledge that in the context of 'known contradictions and tensions' constituting discursive lack, the similarities and differences which appear to be present in the 3 discourses are hegemonic in the sense that they each represent different reactions to the same market forces. This implies that in redressing any lack in regeneration policy discourse, we must consider ways of ameliorating the ills of the market through negotiation between the different discourses;

- Highlight the utility of a critical approach in striving for a re-articulation of the meaning and goals of regeneration in line with a shared value based about what a successful economy actually means and to whom;

- In adopting a more critical approach to tackling deprivation, highlight the need to surface the public discourse (i.e. communities) which is missing from this debate, on the basis that this is currently dominated by the experience of formal actors involved in the strategic design, delivery and management of regeneration.

UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

The research makes a unique contribution to the field of regeneration policy and discourse analysis in four ways. The first is empirical, in offering a critical explanation of the persistence of ambiguity in regeneration policy discourse and how actors seemingly manage and make sense of this ambiguity affectively (drawing on emotional investment). To this end, two papers based on the empirical findings from this research, were presented at the Regional Studies Association (RSA) conference in Newcastle (April 2011) and the Critical Management Conference (CMS) in Naples (July 2011) in order to contribute to the wider debate about explanations for persistent ambiguity in policy goals.

The second contribution is methodological in seeking to make operational a critical form of policy analysis based on applying Laclau & Mouffe's (2001) theory of socialist hegemony which draws on Marxist, structuralist and Post-structuralist critiques in highlighting the imperative of the political context in shaping reality. To this end, a paper was presented at the 6th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) in Iceland in August (2011) as part of the 'argumentative turn' stream chaired by Frank Fischer and Henk Wagenaar (See Appendix). In doing so, this also sought to contribute to addressing the complaint by Howarth (2005 In: Howarth & Torfing 2005) that what currently exists in critical theory is a methodological deficit on the account of the ontological basis of discourse not being considered or operationalised in terms of its epistemological and methodological considerations.

The third contribution is theoretical, in seeking to extend both the policy implementation debate and the leadership debate, by adding to well-established critique about the

limitations of rational and critical policy analysis in the broader policy sciences in the context of increasing complexity. To this end, a paper has been prepared for presentation at the Centre for Leadership at the University of Birmingham (CLUB) and latterly, IRSPM conference in Rome (April 2012) with a view to contributing to the emergent debate about 'what it means to lead' in more complex contexts from a more critical perspective.

The fourth contribution is from a policy perspective, in assisting policy makers and practitioners to make sense of persistent ambiguity in policy. To this end, a summary of this research has been accepted for publication in RSA Regional Insights Magazine this autumn (September 2011) as a means of disseminating the findings of this research to a wide international practitioner and policy maker audience.

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PHASE 1 PILOT STUDY REPORT

Politicisation in Housing-Led Regeneration: To what extent are neighbourhoods gentrified through housing-led regeneration? Alyson Nicholds, March 2008

Introduction

This report details the findings of a pilot study which sought to investigate a small aspect of politicization in the context of regeneration; by exploring the *intentions of housing-led regeneration policy for the health of deprived communities*. The aim was to 'operationalise' the notion of politicisation and look for examples where it may have undermined the health contribution. It was also to trial the use of an interpretive framework; interpretive analysis for use in the main study.

The main PhD study arises as a result of persistent poverty in the context of an emerging critique about the goals of regeneration being hindered by the dominant political ideology. It is situated in the context of regeneration's repeated failure to tackle the SE determinants of poverty along with a poor understanding of the mechanisms behind regeneration, including the extent to which regeneration impacts positively on health.

An interpretive approach explores 'the way in which language created at various stages of the policy process may symbolically transmit meanings' (Yanow 2000, p131). Meaning is conveyed through the use of 'metaphors' which describe a way of seeing or doing based on a values and belief which usually dictate a certain 'course of action' through physical 'objects' and ritualistic 'acts'. Myths are created where there is discomfort or dissonance between the value held and the 'act' being undertaken. The process is based on identifying policy communities who share an understanding of a problem (shared meaning) by making explicit the 'tacit knowledge, values and beliefs' embodied within language, objects and acts.

In keeping with the essence of an interpretive approach and for the benefit of learning for the wider PhD study, the pilot study report is written in the form of a narrative, detailing the thoughts behind certain actions and reflections on the process.   As such this report will be organised in the following way:-

1. Rationale for pilot study and background to PhD study
2. Key Literature pertaining to politicization and its role in regeneration
3. Methodology and background to interpretive analysis
4. Findings
    a. Reflections on operationalising the pilot

b. Reflections on design issues
c. The value of an Interpretive Approach
d. Identifying policy communities

Rationale for Pilot Study

Background to PhD research

It has been suggested that urban problems have been so driven by the dominant political ideology that solutions have become politicised in order to build voter capacity, rather than to meet community needs (Atkinson 2000a, Wilks-Heeg 2004). In the context of persistent poverty (JRF 2006) and the repeated failure of urban policy to tackle the root causes of poverty (Lawless 1989, Atkinson & Moon 1994, Curtis et al 2002), the main Phd study seeks to explore the capacity for regeneration professionals to develop their health improvement role by exploring the *intentions of regeneration policy for the health of deprived communities*.

In the context of a dominant ideology driving regeneration's goals and the potential for selectivity of truth and power in defining urban problems (Fischer 1993), a *meso-level* policy analysis is intended to allow both the practice of regeneration (at a micro-level) and the alleged dominant forces (at a macro-level) through the interpretations of practitioners, to be explored. An *idealist ontology* is seen to offer the most appropriate insight into the role that human behavior might play in policy making and policy change (May 2005). In applying an interpretivist epistemology, differences in interpretations of the debate can be traced and explored through identifying the symbols inherent within policy and the language, objects, acts used by practitioners to describe their understanding (Yanow 1996). This can be best approached using an ethnographic methodology involving interview, observation and documentary analysis.

PhD Research Aim: To clarify and explore the capacity for regeneration professionals to develop their health improvement role by exploring the *intentions of regeneration policy for the health of deprived communities*.

Research Questions:

1. **What does regeneration policy intend for the health of deprived communities?**
   a. What are the goals of regeneration policy? (what 'problems' does it seek to overcome?)
   b. How does regeneration policy talk about poverty and its impact on health? (language metaphors)
   c. What, if any, are the 'health outcomes' sought from regeneration policy and how are they defined?

2. **How is regeneration policy being framed in terms of its impact on the health of deprived communities?**
    a. Who are the key stakeholders or interpretive communities in regeneration and what prior experience do they bring?
    b. How do these 'interpretive communities' talk about regeneration and its interaction with health?
    c. What language is being used to shape perceptions and understanding and what prescribed actions are implied as a result?

3. **What is the range of policy consequences for improving the health of deprived communities?**
    a. What is the range of difference in interpretations about the meaning of regeneration policy and its impact on health?
    b. What impact do differences in interpretations have in the range of policy consequences for regeneration?
    c. What implications does this have for the health improvement role of regeneration professionals?

Aims of pilot study

A pilot study was designed to operationalize some of the key themes in the Phd research by focusing on a small area of politicization in regeneration and exploring the likely impact on health using an interpretivist approach. Part of the aim of the pilot study was also to test interpretive analysis as a possible analytical framework for the larger study. The key objective was to identify the range of 'interpretive communities' and the various ways in which they framed the debate around gentrification in housing led regeneration. As such, the main objectives of the pilot study were to:-

- To operationalise the larger study by defining politicization, testing its existence in regeneration and exploring ways in which it may impact on health;
- Identify policy communities relevant to the field of regeneration and seek their understanding of the issue of politicization;
- To explore the value of interpretive methods in highlighting differing policy communities interpretations' of the impact of politicization on the health of deprived communities;
- To reflect on design issues pertinent to the larger Phd study through a process of reflection and self critique

Key Literature

Politicization and its role in regeneration

The process of politicization in regeneration refers the way that policy problems are constructed or 'framed' in ways which have political resonance to the party in power

(Brannan, John and Stoker 2006, Wilks-Heeg 1996, Atkinson and Moon). According to Stone (2001) it involves a process of *'image making where beliefs about blame, cause and responsibility are attributed by those in power in order to legitimize a particular course of action'*. In the context of regeneration policy, past approaches since 1945, are littered with differing beliefs about the causes of urban problems (Atkinson 2000a). In the 1970's, Wilks-Heeg (1996) notes a Marxist appeal in Community Development Projects or CDP's, where urban problems were seen to be the direct result of capital accumulation (Atkinson and Moon 1994, Wilks-Heeg 1996). Stewart (2003) notes how CDP's challenged the government beliefs about the structural causes of poverty, inciting the later closure of the projects by the Labour government at the time.   The incoming conservative government in 1979 shifted yet again with Thatcher's neo-liberal attempt at economic revitalization inspired by their interest in new public management approaches (NPM). According to Wilks-Heeg (1996), this attempt to remedy industrial decline, has continued into the 1990's with Labour's 3rd way approach in which market based solutions are sought in favour of growth, entrepreneurship, enterprise and wealth creation, at the same time bringing the state back in through a focus on partnerships and mainstreaming services (Diamond and Liddle 2006). Not only has this introduced a new form of localism, the interest in greater participation from the public has been coupled with a drive for efficiency through NPM (Johnston and Coaffee 2007, Hughes 2002, Hood 1991).

Areas where politicization in regeneration has undermined health

In reviewing the literature, it is possible to identify several areas where the politicization of regeneration policy has undermined the health contribution. This can be witnessed across regenerations' involvement in employment initiatives, housing renewal and community participation. In his analysis of the impact of regeneration on health, Curtis et al (2002) talks about failure of employment initiatives to meet the socio-economic needs of deprived local communities due to issues like travel distance, low pay, work-stress not being addressed. Here, Curtis et al (2002) found examples of communities being worse off both in terms of income and health than before they were employed. Similarly, Thomson (2006) found little change in community self-reported health status, one year on from undergoing a housing renewal scheme. In the MSc. Study (2007), regeneration practitioners talked explicitly in terms of the governments' Neighbourhood Renewal programme. They expressed a deep commitment to the success of regeneration despite repeated examples of housing renewal initiatives which had resulted in the 'gentrification' of an area. They described this in relation to areas being developed in such a way as to physically and financially exclude existing communities from the new facilities on offer in the area. Brannan, John and Stoker (2006) talk about the framing of participation through the government's *Active Citizenship Programme* to tackle social exclusion.   In their analysis they show how the framing of the programme seeks to achieve political resonance with the electorate and other agencies, rather than achieving any real outcome (Brannan, John and Stoker 2006, p1003).

 Housing-led regeneration policy, politicization and health

Housing development has been linked to the wider aspects of neighbourhood regeneration through schemes such as housing market renewal schemes in areas of low demand; new developments which include affordable housing schemes; and targeted regeneration

initiatives such as New Deal for Community programmes or Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, which include an element of housing renewal in their design (Thomson 2006). Atkinson (2004) talks about housing-led regeneration in terms of urban renaissance; giving rise to a whole host of initiatives including Housing Market renewal, affordable housing, attracting the middle class home-owners and demolition. He re-visits the notion of gentrification in terms of "upper middle classes purchasing property in deprived areas" and asks that, far from the term being an old problem, whether in fact housing led regeneration is actually about a return to this notion of 'gentrification by the back door'. With Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) talking about 'civic boosterism' through attracting public-private partnerships, are we in fact merely securing middle class futures for cities, at the expense of other classes? According to Atkinson (2004), housing led regeneration policy seems to imply that we can turn around an ailing neighbourhood by re-introducing the middle classes into an area and refurbishing run down areas. But, he asks on what basis? What are the benefits of doing so? And who really wins from this sort of development? Based on an appraisal of existing literature, Atkinson attempts to summarise the positive and negative impacts of gentrification: +ve = renewal of physical environment/ promotion of owner occupier status/ encouraging investment in an area/ changing the social mix/increasing the price of property/ improving an area in terms of service provision. -ve= displacement of poor households into cheaper areas/ community conflict/ needs not being met by new area/ debt. As a result. Atkinson (2004) asks; to what extent is SCS just gentrification by the back door? Is SCS merely state sponsored gentrification? Ultimately, in considering the health impact of regeneration, it begs the question of for whose benefit is regeneration intended?

Methodology

Aim

A pilot study was planned to explore an aspect of regeneration where politicization has negatively impacted on health.

Objectives

- To operationalise the larger study by defining politicization, testing its existence in regeneration and exploring ways in which it may impact on health;
- To reflect on design issues pertinent to the larger Phd study through a process of reflection and self critique
- To explore the value of interpretive methods in highlighting differing policy communities interpretations' of the impact of politicization on the health of deprived communities;
- Identify policy communities relevant to the field of regeneration and seek their understanding of the issue of politicization;

Research Design

In considering the different ways in which regeneration policy may have undermined health, it was important to select an urban policy problem which had local currency in the field of

regeneration policy. This is certainly the case for gentrification, which has been discussed widely in the academic literature and the press (Thomson 2006, Atkinson 2004). It was also frequently discussed during interviews with practitioners in the MSc Study (Nicholds 2007). Having conducted a brief web-search of the current regeneration context, it made sense to 'pitch the research' at the regional level, since this is where most of the policy development, funding and decisions appeared to take place. On this basis, this would also offer a useful context from which to sample participants for the study. In designing an appropriate research tool, the aim was to identify the full range of practitioners from the differing policy communities and explore how they interpreted the debate; to explore areas where differing policy communities were not listening to each other and consider how this caused problems; and where attempts had been taken to overcome these issues.

Research Questions

In seeking to better understand the problem of gentrification, it is appropriate to explore key actors' interpretations housing renewal policy and its perceived impact on the health of deprived communities, in line with the following research questions:

1. What are the intentions of housing renewal policy for the health of deprived communities?
2. What impact does housing renewal policy have on the health of deprived communities and what is the contribution of policy design to this?

Research Tools

The following interview questions spring naturally from the above research questions and will be used as a basis for developing an interview schedule:-

RQ	What are the intentions of housing renewal for the health of deprived communities?	What impact does housing renewal have on the health of deprived communities?	How do agencies define solutions to the problem of gentrification?
Q	1. Who is intended to benefit from housing renewal and in what way? 2. What is your understanding of the problems of deprived communities and does housing renewal seek to overcome these?	3. Who benefits from housing renewal and in what way? 4. Who do you think loses out from housing renewal and how? 5. What are the consequences of this for the health of deprived communities?	6. What might be some of the reasons for the dis-benefits occurring? 7. To what extent do you see gentrification as a problem of policy design? How do you think the dis-benefits of physical renewal might be ameliorated? 8. What barriers do you see as needing to be overcome in order for the problem to be rectified?

Interpretive Analysis

An interpretive approach will be used to identify the intention of regeneration policy goals and its impact on the health of deprived communities. Policy communities, or interpretive communities, as they are sometimes known, pertains to key actors in the field who may, because of their background or training, have different perspectives on the meaning of regeneration policy. This is described here by Yanow (2001):

> *'the purpose…is two-fold; to identify groups of people who might share understanding of policy ideas and language that would be different from other groups' understandings; and to identify the artifacts through which these understandings are expressed, communicated and interpreted' (Yanow 2001 p27)*

The aim within this study will be to discover the hidden meaning within regeneration policy by exploring both the symbols of meaning and the human artifacts of meaning; that is the language, objects and acts displayed by policy communities' in their attempts to interpret and implement regeneration policy. Symbols of meaning refer to the physical determinants of how a policy is described:

> *Symbols of meaning = "Concrete abstraction to represent a social convention" (Yanow 1996, p 9). They are publicly recognisable and contextually and historically significant (i.e. a dove can represent peace as well as food). Symbols can relate to an organisation or policy through the rituals they imply. It can relate to its buildings or the metaphors used to describe it. For instance; in her study, people referred to 'Community centre's as supermarkets' and used metaphors pertaining to the vocabulary of shop-keepers/ peddlers/ clerks/ goods/ merchandise / turnover to describe the activities of community centres.*

Human artifacts of meaning relate to the way that policy is interpreted by key actors in the policy process; that is the language they use to talk about their work (language); the way in which this translated into policy or documents (objects); and how this determines or prescribes action (acts):-

> *Human artifacts of meaning = Artifactual symbols relate to the symbolic language, objects and symbolic acts used by actors to represent their beliefs, values and feelings about an organisation or policy. They can be expressed emotionally (as feelings), cognitively (as thoughts) or morally (as beliefs). What is said and done by actors carries the meaning behind their acts and actors can interpret this meaning freely depending on their professional background, experiences, and previous training (Yanow 1996, p10).*

In conducting an interpretive analysis Yanow talks about adopting a cumulative approach as a result of being immersed in the 'data' over a long period of time, with data referring to the symbols, objects and acts which emerge. In her analysis of the Israeli new town developments, she didn't consider it necessary to develop prior categories for analysis based on 'objects', 'acts', or 'metaphors', rather they merely emerged throughout the study as a means of describing the project and its processes and also as a result of reading the literature around IA (Yanow 1996, p44).

The process of going 'back and forth' from the literature, to the field-notes, the printed material, the interview transcripts provides an invaluable source of data from a range of different perspectives (or interpretations). Rather than using a pre-defined conceptual framework (similar to 'coding down' – Jennifer Mason), Yanow uses a large 'conceptual box' simply entitled 'meanings' through which all data from interviews, observation and doc analysis is 'filtered' by checking its meaning. Here, the researcher engages in a unique process of 'self-estrangement', in helping to continually place oneself, as the researcher, away from the data (to consider the obvious meaning or taken for granted assumptions), at the same as immersing oneself back again, in the data to bring clarification.

The key is to ask – what is taken for granted with this meaning? And to look for areas where there is conflicting interpretations. For example, in investigating the role of electromagnetic frequencies in cancer, Linder (1995) spoke to several different policy communities to explore how they each interpreted the debate. Linder (1995) discovered 5 'communities of meaning' in which policy communities framed the debate differently depending upon their background and interests. For instance, critics of the power industry called it a 'Public Health emergency' while those within the power industry claimed that 'there was inconclusive scientific research' to raise concern.

The findings will now be discussed as a series of reflections based on the objectives below:

- seeking to operationalise the concepts under exploration;
- seek potential policy communities;
- test out the value of an interpretive approach and
- reflect on learning points for the data collection process within the main study.

FINDINGS 1: Operationalising the research

In planning the pilot study, it was important to operationalise what was meant by the term 'politicisation' in the context of urban policy failure and to consider the range of possible policy areas in which it could be studied. I did this by considering all of the areas in the

literature where regeneration policy had been considered to failing due to negatively impacting on health or as a result of symbolic outcomes and then seeking to locate this within regeneration policy arenas:-

- What was politicization and how did it manifest itself in political life?
- What examples are there of politicisation occurring in the context of regeneration?
- And if so, how does the process impact on health and well-being?

Defining Politicization: - In re-visiting the literature from public health and urban geography, i was reminded that the process of politicization in regeneration refers the way that policy problems are 'framed' in ways which have political resonance to the party in power (Brannan, John and Stoker 2006, Wilks-Heeg 1996, Atkinson and Moon). A brief search of the litearture literature highlighted several areas in which politicisation had beed discussed; this included housing-led regeneration and the problem of gentrification (in which housing regeneration policy had led to displacement (Atkinson 2000a); employment policy (in which employment initiatives had failed to meet the socio-economic needs of deprived local communities resulting in communities were worse off both in terms of income and health than before they were employed (Curtis et al 2002, Thomson 2006); and community involvement (through the framing of participation through the government's Active Citizenship Programme to tackle social exclusion). Following review of the literature, I decided to explore the problem of gentrification as an example of politicisation, not least because of the volume of literature on this problem, but also because it was clearly linked to the policy area, Urban Renaissance. Interestingly this was also topic which emerged frequently during interviews in the Msc study into the role that public health might play in regeneration (Nicholds 2007)

Locating the research problem in local policy: - Background reading around housing strategy in the context of regeneration highlighted several areas of policy as being pertinent. The Sustainable Community Strategy (ODPM 2003) talked about quality of life in terms of 'succesful and thriving communities which are economically prosperous, have decent home at a price people can afford, and a well designed, accessible and pleasant living and working environment'. It also mentioned deprived communities, something which was useful to be able to probe the understanding of, during interviews. The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS), produced by the Regional Assembly was also rooted in the SCS and talked about 'affordable housing to meet *all* community needs'. It also described the context of supply and demand by sub-region and mentioned gentrification in a positive light in the 3 cities in the region. This was very useful in knowing that the term 'gentrification' not only had some currency within policy documents and potentially within my sample population, but that it also potentially held dual meanings, intepretively, as compared with the literature.

Selecting a sample – Not being from a housing background, I began by doing a quick web-search which helped me to explore the reional infrastructure around housing and regeneration. I noticed that the Regional infrastructure consisted of a Regional Development Agency (RDA), a Regional Economic Strategy (RES); various Regional partnerships; Urban Regeneration Companies; Regional Centres of Excellence. At this stage I wasn't clear which partnerships did what, or indeed if they were relevant. Also, it was

difficult to know whether I needed regeneration agencies or housing. This posed as a real difficulty for the first phase of the pilot study and meant I had a bit of fact finding to do before I could secure any contacts from the field. To me it felt like a bit of a 'wild goose chase' speaking to all and sundry, being transferred from one dept to another – 'oh its not us you need to speak to = you need housing' became very common response! This told me that despite the term 'housing-led regeneration' being frequently used in the public health literature, it did not necessarily hold currency locally in case study sites. There was also the possibility (as with the term 'gentrification') that the term 'housing-regeneration held different meanings to people also. also helddifferent meanings depending on the insititutional context (see section 2. on 'reflecting on design issues).

Selecting an 'area' to study: Background research into the region showed that there were a small number of Nieghbourhood Renewal Funding areas (NRF) which might be useful in terms of a focus for recruitment. The Regional Housing Strartegy described quite different challenges within each area/ sub-region pertaining to either an 'oversupply in new housing provision'/ with high numbers of empty homes in the 3 cities to ' low demand for housing in the North of the region with housing in need of regeneration. Equally, the RHS also talked about the problem of linking economic opportunity in both areas because of problems recruiting locally or because of an unwlllingness of employers to locate to areas that are unnattractive or in decline. In terms of background context, this information was invaluable in helping not only to build up a picture of the area I was about to enter and its problems but also as useful areas to focus on in interviews.

Identifying a sample: If the aim of the pilot study is to identify the full range of practitioners from differing policy communities and explore how they interpret the debate it makes sense to think about the nature of differing agencies and how they might be accessed. Yanow (1999) talks about policy communities as consisting of policy makers, agencies and community.- In keeping with an interpetive approach I decided it would be helpful to source participants for the study according to Yanow's suggested 'policy/agency/ community'. This provided a good mix of housing and regen practitioners from all of the key agencies. Searching of key organisations in the region showed that there were several possible contenders:-

- **Policy -** RDA (links RHS to Regional Economic Strategy,RES); RA (oversee RHS), Govt Office (support housing-led regen initiatives; English Partnerships (assist in sourcing land for new development).
- **Agency** - Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders (Housing-led regen initiatives); Housing Partnerships (Not for profit in regen areas using funding from City/ District Councils); Urban Regen Co's (Partnerships involving private sector developers); Arms Length Management Co's or ALMO's (Council housing provision); Registered Social Landlords or RSL's (providing affordable housing to vulnerable groups)
- **Community** - Housing led-regeneration initiatives (New Deal for Communities or NDC/ Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders or NMP); Community Reps on Housing Partnerships

FINDINGS 2. Reflecting on design issues

Recruitment of sample – Based on the background research, I decided to base the recruitment around actors involved in 'housing-led regeneration' through examining key policy documents (see below) and hold phone discussions with 3 of the Regional Agencies & Regen/ Economic Development depts in local councils. Phone calls were time consuming because I discovered I was using the wrong wording (housing renewal) which meant that I kept getting referred to local authority housing depts. But through re-visiting the key documents and conducting an initial interview at the RDA, I changed my wording to 'housing-led regeneration' and 'housing market renewal'. I also discovered that much planning takes place in 'housing strategy departments' in local authorities and in terms of exploring 'gentrification' many agencies seem refer to community needs differently in terms of 'existing communities', 'future communities', and 'investors'.   When mentioning gentrification during recruitment, agencies either hadn't heard of the term or if they seemed sensitive to the term. So, I decided to described the research in terms of 'balancing local economic priorities with local need'. This worked really well and improved access markedly.

Adopting the 'right language' - At the start of recruitment I started using 'housing renewal' but it seemed to refer to 'council refurbishment/ enveloping schemes'. I decided to start using the term 'connections between 'urban regeneration, housing and well-being' and this got me interviews with URC, MVMP, but then hit a low again with councils who didn't perceive they had a significant role in regeneration. Looking through the key documents (SCS/ RHS) again, highlighted a term 'housing-led regeneration' including a blurb about how regeneration was often driven by changes to the housing provision. This presented an opportunity to test yet another term, to see if this held any more appeal. Subsequently, I got immediate responses from agencies like NDC's.   Housing led regeneration was mentioned in the policy literature in connection with the- overarching term 'urban renaissance' which sought to address the wider factors associated with the regeneration of an area through housing. However, once I began interviews, getting people to talk about housing in the context of regeneration led to some initial confusion (see PS-4)! This was because the term seemed to mean different things to different people depending upon whether they had a regeneration background or not. To overcome this, I developed a 'generic interview schedule' which I then adapted for different types of agencies. I did this by considering the nature of the agency (i.e. NDC) and how the work might have related to housing. This resulted in around 4 different types of interview schedule – one for regional agencies, one for URC's, one for councils and one for community agencies. Although this was time consuming, it did mean that the interviews flowed well and extracted material of sufficient depth.

Arranging interviews – Initially I arranged 4 interviews with Regional and District level agencies and beginning in June. This was due to busy diaries and a 2 week 'half term holiday' 29 May- 6 June, right in the middle of my data collection!). Interviews with the NDC's were more difficult because of them drawing to a close. But making contact with 2 guides, one at the NDC and one at the housing partnership was invaluable – they recruited several other people for me, including other officers, managers and resident board

members. This worked really well and saved me a lot of time. Interviews took place at a time and place to suit participants and where possible, recorded using an Olympus micro-cassette recorder. As soon after each interview, as possible, interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed at the same time. In total, fifteen participants were recruited to take part in the pilot study. These were drawn from across a Midlands region according to the small number of NRF areas identified in the RHS. In keeping with an interpretive approach, the sample was selected from related policy, agency and community groups, within the fields of housing and regeneration as shown in the table below.

POLICY	RDA	1.	Housing Policy Advisor
	Regional Assembly	2.	Planning Policy Advisor
	Govt Office	3.	Housing and Regeneration Policy Advisor
AGENCY	Housing Partnership	4.	Managing Director
		5.	Community Development Officer
	Urban Regeneration Company	6.	Planning Officer
		7.	Chief Executive
	Local Authority	8.	Team Leader Housing Strategy
		9.	Head Housing Strategy/ LSP
		10.	Housing Strategy/ Regional Housing Board Rep
		11.	Housing Strategy/ LSP
COMMUNITY	New Deal for Communities	12.	Community Development Manager (NDC)
		13.	Resident Board member (NDC)
	Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder	14.	Manager (NMP)
	Housing Partnership	15.	Resident Board member (Housing Partnership)

Wording of interview questions – the wording has changed gradually over time, to account for 6 versions of the interview schedule! Changes were needed each time because initially the schedule was too leading in terms of gentrification or too specific in terms of an area suffering from market failure. Over time, although the questions have changed, they have still required much tweaking after each interview which has been painstaking! It's not been until recently that I have realized that actually, what I need to do is keep the basic structure but make the questions more generic/ broad, so that the language applies to any agency, irrespective of its market situation. For instance – not assuming that the area is suffering market failure – but asking participants to talk about 'the housing market situation in their area – in terms of needs and aspirations' and exploring these further by asking about 'the challenges this brings and subsequent impact'. From being asked this question. Participants had an opportunity to discuss any issues they felt were relevant, without being led by my assumptions of the problems in the area. This latter question has worked really well and brought fruitful results.

Talking about gentrification ('G')–One problem that arose quite early on involved how to focus my discussion around the problem of 'G'; whether directly or indirectly through questioning. When I used the term 'G' during recruitment, people's reaction was mixed, with some never having heard of the term, some reacting defensively to it and others laughing at the suggestion that G was still a problem. Whilst this gave me a hint that there were differences in the way G was perceived, it did make me question the value in discussing it directly if it blocked my access to the sample, either because people didn't see the relevance to them, or indeed were threatened by the research! Ethically, because my

research was about 'G', this created a potential problem for me – if I didn't describe the research in terms of 'G', how could I be ethical about getting people to agree to be interviewed? After much musing, and re-reading of the literature on 'G', I decided that it was too risky to use the term 'G' directly, because people could be put off from taking part either because of a lack of relevance or because it had negative connotations. But there was nothing wrong with me talking about the term indirectly, through discussion of the consequences of development and its impact in health. Re-visiting the literature had highlighted potential impact on health as:-

- displacement in terms of being forcibly removed from an area away from family/ friends;
- changes to levels of affordability through compensation schemes paying less than market value at the same time as transferring to higher private rents or shared ownership schemes;
- changes in tenure from either social housing to private rent/ social housing to shared ownership thus reducing security of tenancy.

In later interviews, I revised the interview schedule to include more 'generic' questions about the different challenges that areas faced in terms of housing provision'. This allowed people to talk about issues which may be related to G, whilst not having to acknowledge whether or not it exists. Later on, I did trial some questions which asked about G directly. This was part of a phase 2 type questioning process in which I summarized what people had been saying and reflected it back to them, to check understanding and attempt to make explicit the interpretations they had actually made in the interview. Yanow (2000) talks about the importance of such questioning in 'testing' new and emerging interpretations with interviewees. By the end of interviewing, this process had become second nature and I wasn't even aware that I had moved onto stage 2 questioning. Naturally, this type of questioning easily led onto questions about 'so what'; that is, 'so, if what you're saying is……, then what's the alternative?'

FINDINGS 3. Exploring the value of Interpretive Analysis

Organising the data - In her analysis of the Israeli new town developments, Yanow (2000) didn't consider it necessary to develop prior categories for analysis based on 'objects', 'acts', or 'metaphors', rather they merely emerged throughout the study as a means of describing the project and its processes and also as a result of reading the literature around IA (Yanow 1996, p44). Instead, Yanow (2000) talks about adopting a cumulative approach as a result of being immersed in the 'data' over a long period of time, with data referring to the symbols, objects and acts which emerge.   At first I was unsure about how to conduct the analysis; you are caught between this desire to 'read about IA' and actually 'conducting the analysis'. I found this extremely frustrating at first because I simply didn't know exactly what 'elements' I was looking for (i.e. in terms of symbolic codes), and furthermore, because as a past qualitative researcher, I also had a tendency for 'thematic analysis' I felt drawn to working in the way I was methodologically comfortable with.

Beginning with basic coding - In line with Yanow's (2001) suggestion *not* to apply any analytical framework in terms of language, objects or acts at the start, I began early analysis using simple coding of text and looking at text according to Yanow's filter 'meaning'. I continued with this process for the first 3 transcripts, developing early codes in connection with the following categories but I found it difficult to manage the analysis by using this simple filter of just 'meaning'. Despite this, I developed some early codes which seemed to 'tell the story' of the research:-

- Policy intentions
- Market economies in housing;
- Needs of deprived communities;
- Role of housing development;
- Affordable housing
- Housing tenure.

Getting a basic story but symbolism??? - I used the first 4 transcripts to develop a series of 'summary notes' for analysis (see appendix) but they really lacked a basic understanding of what interpretive analysis was about. I was also unsure of the difference between symbolic language, objects and acts and what they actually looked like! This, according to Yanow (2000) is a common problem, to which a whole chapter is devoted to identifying 'how you know when something is symbolic' (p43). I too had this problem and despite immersing myself in the data, I seemed able only to perform simple coding based on a summary of what was being said. I also realized that I had a distinct need to 'order' the interview data in terms of categories and codes. On later reflection, I realized this was probably due to a) a personal tendency to apply a grounded theory approach in 'coding up and down' and b) still not fully understanding enough about conducting an interpretive analysis. Thus, despite having formed these early codes, I decided to put them to one side and return to the interpretive literature once more for further inspiration.

Practical application of interpretive approach – On returning to the literature to consider the practical application of an interpretive approach, I began to realize that an interpretive approach differed from thematic approached to policy analysis in its capacity to offer a much deeper analysis of what is being said in interviews by exposing 'divisions' or differences in interpretations amongst the sample. I realized from re-visiting the literature that this is premised on answering 4 basic questions:-

- which policy communities are there?
- how are they interpreting the debate differently?
- what problems arise as a result?
- what are the consequences?

This formed the basis of an analytical framework in enabling me to ask questions of the data. As such, in returning to the initial data analysis, I was able to organize the basic coding I had already done into more meaningful themes based on identifying differences in opinion (language) and the actions that subsequently followed (acts).

Starting to identify the language used –I knew from both my notes after interview and the analysis I had already performed that, in the first 3 transcripts (a policy maker, a developer and a council officer) there were some noticeable differences in the way they each talked about housing development. I therefore decided to try and map these differences by transferring the various codes I had already developed, onto separate cards (see below). Through the process of arranging the different cards to see where there were similarities and differences in opinion, it became clear that, while developers talked about 'future communities', policymakers seemed to mention 'existing, future and investor communities while the council seemed to focus on 'middle-class flight'. Analysis of a further 4 interviews showed that these terms were common amongst all interviewees, it was just a case of arranging the cards to see if there was a pattern in terms of identifiable policy communities. But what was it that made these 3 interviews different? Who were these interviewees, and what made them interpret the debate so differently?

Breakthrough as I immerse myself in the data! - In organizing and re-organising the cards around the basic codes I had already developed, I really started to immerse myself in the data. I started to see the value of adopting the 'interpretive framework' (described earlier); i.e. asking oneself 'who are the different policy communities' and 'how do they interpret the debate' etc. This was a real breakthrough and I realized that up until this point, in failing to ask these simple questions, my analysis had remained fairly primitive. Having now analysed 8 interviews I decided to arrange the cards in terms of 3 columns; developers; policy-makers; and councils; with the intention of testing the concepts and adding new cards from the analysis of later transcripts, as and when they emerged. Using the cards worked well and allowed me flexibility in trying out lots of ideas and comparisons.

**Figure: Showing individual cards with individual codes**

Starting to see differences in 'interpretive' patterns – Once I began looking at the codes I had developed through the lens of this framework, I quickly began to see that the interviewees appeared to share common policy interpretations in terms of the importance of 'housing for all' and 'affordable housing' (policy intentions) but that these terms meant

different things to different people. Writing the codes out onto individual cards allowed me to see these different interpretations vividly and re-arrange the cards easily to look for patterns. This manual approach to analysis is similar to that used in thematic analysis, except you have 3 columns (rather than 1) to represent the different meanings.

Figure: Showing evolving differences in meaning across the policy communities

Intentions of policy	How do policy communities interpret the debate?		
	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3
"Housing for all"	Improving the offer for future communities	Preventing middle class flight	Improving the offer for existing, future and investor communities
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing not financially viable;	No incentive for affordable housing	Individualistic attitudes of investors
Tackling Social Inequity	New developments not meant for deprived communities	Deprivation already tackled by 'past regeneration schemes'	Differences of opinion about the causes of deprivation

Starting to identify policy communities?? - I continued with this approach during analysis, asking myself the basic questions and using the cards I had already made, to see if any patterns emerged. I realized that other policy intentions included 'tackling social inequity' and that, once again, variations in opinion could be found on the cards developed during basic coding process.   In re-arranging the cards in this way, I started to see the beginning of 3 potential policy communities, in which 3 very different perspectives emerged; that which seemed to be applicable to developers; councils; and policy-makers.   Differences were evident in the way they each talked about housing development (language). The difficulty was that in having such a small sample, the policy communities were easy to identify (by way of agency) and I was worried that a) this precluded confidentiality and b) in linking the interviewees in this way, it was too obvious and there was still some way to go in terms of identifying the symbolism inherent in the interpretations.

Identifying symbolic objects and acts – Despite making good progress in exploring the language used in the debate, I was intrigued by the notion of objects and acts. If the differences were so apparent in the language used by policy communities, how did this influence their actions? So, after re-visiting the interpretive literature once more, I decided to immerse myself in the remaining 4 transcripts which added to the existing interpretations well. While analyzing one interview with a developer, it suddenly became clear that in their 'talk' about 'housing being for everyone' emerged, at the same time, a conflict between meeting economic priorities and affordable housing needs may represent a myth. From

listening to the interview again, I became very aware of the 'dance' that takes between councils and developers when seeking planning permission for new developments. I started to wonder whether this might represent a 'ritual', because councils and developers go through the motions despite the knowledge that 'affordable housing is non-viable'. The surfacing of such symbolic artifacts was very exciting and showed that with perseverance, and frequent movement 'back and forth' to the interpretive literature, it was possible to perform a very rich interpretive analysis of the data. This held tremendous potential for the use of an interpretive tool in the second phase of the research.

Language (metaphors) = 'those wicked developers'

Object (policy) = Section 106 and getting planning permission from the council

Act (rituals/ myths) = an appraisal which shows that AH is not financially viable

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This notion that 'affordable housing is not viable' had come up repeatedly during analysis (in PS-1, PS-2, PS-4 and PS-7) but I realized now that it may form the basis of a 'ritual'. So, I added a coloured 'post-it' note to the card to denote a possible 'ritual or act' and started to look for other possible objects and acts which may flow from the language that different policy communities had used:-

Identifying problems that arose as a result of different PC interpretations - By continually asking 'who is holding this opinion' and 'where are there differences in interpretation' I became aware of how problems might arise as a result. I began by looking for any cards which seemed to talk about 'problems' or consequences and linking them to the various policy intentions such as 'housing for all', affordable housing for all' and tackling social inequality'. Working with the basic codes on small cards (now organized according to language, objects and acts) really helped to make the differences vivid and allowed me to trial different ways of organising the 'architecture of the debate' according to common patterns.

Figure: Showing process of conducting interpretive analysis and the formation of three policy communities of meaning
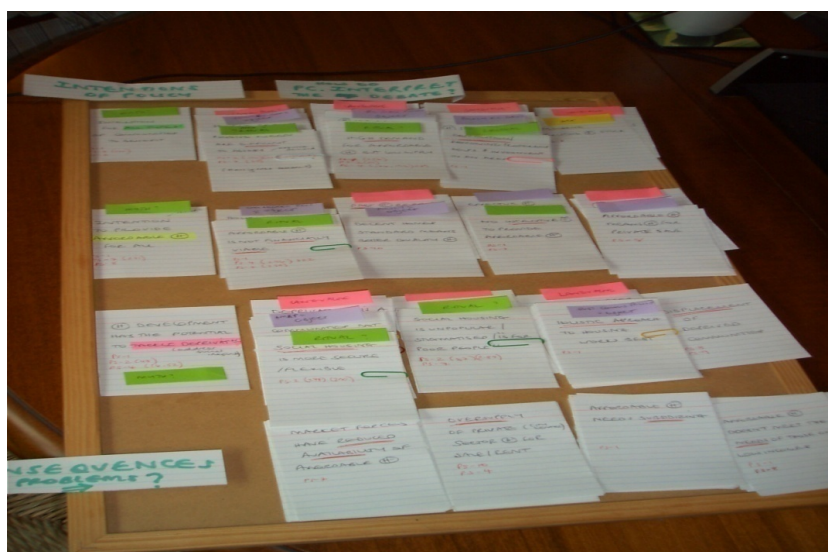
FINDINGS 3. Identifying Policy Communities

Identifying policy communities - is fundamental to an interpretive approach and occurs as a result of different interpretations within a debate. Yanow (2000) talks about using 3 basic policy communities to sample from; that policy' agency and community. This worked really well and allowed me to source a range of different perspectives, sometimes from within the same organisation. For instance, when contacting a housing partnership, instead of just interviewing the chief executive, I arranged to see one of the resident board members too, giving me a community perspective. Equally, when contacting one of the New Deal for Community projects, I interviewed both a manager and a resident board member. In his study of the electromagnetic field (EMF) debate, Linder (1995) defined 5 policy communities according to differences in the way they constructed the problem. Using interpretive analysis, Linder defined difference in the way actors interpreted the debate; differences in the way they viewed members of the public; differences in the way they sought evidence from science and finally, differences in the way they viewed the threat of EMF as a risk to health. Linder (1995) defined these different policy communities according to the symbolism inherent in their language, objects and acts. In doing so, he provides an invaluable example of how to explore the symbolic aspects of different interpretations.

Table 1. Rhetorical elements of five constructions of the EMF problem

Rhetorical	Problem constructions				
	'…public health emergency'	'…threat to the public's welfare'	'…growing public apprehension'	'…spread of premature controls'	'…inconclusive scientific research
Appeals & warrants	Moralist	Paternal	Meliorative	Prudential	Objectivist
Treatment of scientific claims	Partisan	Contributory	Compelling	Authoritative	Decisive
Image of the public	Victims	Potential victims	Potential litigants	Potential activists	Labile audience
Image of EMF	Toxin	Plausible hazard	Social risk	Design issue	Questionable or illusive agent

Taken from Linder S. (1995)

In the pilot study - four policy communities seemed to emerge. Taking Linder's (1995) idea of 'problem construction', these can be described in relation to the three policy intentions actors frequently talked about; housing for all, affordable housing for all and tackling social inequities:-

1. **Housing development is about attracting inward investment**
2. **Housing development is about preventing middle class flight**
3. **Housing development is about balancing the needs of the economy**
4. **Housing development is about appropriate housing for existing communities**

The distinction between 'existing, future and investor' communities arose very early on in the research, but as Yanow suggests, its importance did not emerge until much later on during analysis. They were terms commonly used across all policy communities but with different emphases at different times, depending on the topic of conversations. As problem constructions, the language clearly defines both what policy should follow (objects) what action should be prescribed as a result (acts). Once the different policy communities had been defined, the policy and actions which flowed from them, became obvious. It became easy to see how difference in interpretations might lead to problems/ consequences by way of what was missing from the debate. We will now explore some of the facets of each policy community before describing the typical objects and acts which naturally followed.

1. **"Housing development is about attracting inward investment" (bringing money in??)**

'Housing for all' - Language centred around 'improving the offer for future communities' which in turn was seen as a metaphor for increasing market growth in areas of perceived economic decline. Economic growth served as the driver for action and 'future communities' were seen as the way to 'securing inward investment' by bringing about a 'renaissance of towns and cities' following industrial decline. This was underpinned by economic development policy objects which drives 'competition between cities for maximum growth' and also makes 'city centres the focus for development'. Acts which supported this belief included 'the drawing of boundaries' around areas of the neighbourhood or city; and 'commissioning housing market assessments' to demonstrate demand for the type of housing being built (i.e. luxury apartments) despite 'an over-supply in this market' ('empty properties a problem'). Investors, despite being mentioned by other PC's were not part of the overt language within this PC. However their presence was alluded to through discussions about 'empty properties being a problem' through 'buy-to-let' properties being purchased for investment to leave empty. In holding the belief that 'housing needs are difficult to assess' legitimacy is given to acts such as 'housing market assessment' in determining a need for 'one-bed luxury apartments' when there is already a surplus of such properties on the market.

'Affordable housing' - Within city centre development, affordable housing represented somewhat of a myth within this PC because of the need to secure a 'maximisation of receipts' from housing development due to other investments made across wider parts of the city. This made affordable housing provision an area where developers actually lost out, prompting the belief that 'affordable housing was not financially viable'. It represents a myth because of an impossible conflict between meeting economic priorities and affordable housing needs at the same time. Rituals were evident in the talk around planning permission and there was a type of 'ritualistic dance' that took place in the securing of planning permission for new developments where agencies would 'go through the motions' despite the knowledge that 'affordable housing was actually not viable'.

'Tackling social Inequity' - Talk about tackling social inequity centred on an awareness of social deprivation and the indices of multiple deprivation. However, a lack of viability in affordable housing within the private sector meant that responsibility for existing communities was seen to lie with 'social housing providers'. This devolvement of responsibility was supported by policy objects pertaining to 'social housing and it being more secure' in offering cheaper rents and security of tenure that the private sector could not. There was a sense, in this PC of 'deprived communities needing to be protected' from the ills of the market here; depicted by a myth that 'affordable housing actually meant unaffordable housing' for deprived communities because it often meant a change of tenure and higher rents (private-renting or part-ownership). Indeed there was a shared experience amongst this PC of residents being offered lower than market value compensation (negative impact), and being 'decanted' into temporary areas whilst either waiting for their homes to be demolished, or because they couldn't afford the higher rents in the area being refurbished (displacement). Where residents rent exceeded their previous financial commitment, there was a risk of financial strain for communities or even debt.

PROBLEMS - talk of 'future communities' implies that 'existing communities' are not seen as key to achieving the aim of 'economic growth'. The paradox here is the notion of 'empty properties' being a problem in city centre developments when there is a perceived shortage of affordable housing in other parts of the city. In holding the belief that 'housing needs are difficult to assess', legitimacy is given to acts such as 'housing market assessment' in determining a need for 'one-bed luxury apartments' when there is already a surplus of such properties on the market.

2. **Housing development is about preventing 'middle class flight' (stopping money leaving??)**

Housing for all – In contrast to the previous policy community, interpretations of 'Housing for all' centred on 'preventing middle class flight' and the need to retain investment in an area of economic decline. Economic growth still served as the driver for action by developing housing for private market sale but this was underpinned by policy which drove 'retention of the high earners' notably the middle classes and graduates, who were seen to 'have more choice about housing'. Objects such as 'demolition' and 'securing land for future development serve as a way of securing investment through retention of higher paid communities with jobs boosting the economy.

Affordable housing – Interpretations of affordable housing were seen as recognizing an opportunity in assisting developers to reduce their ultimate profit to under the 20% mark and give back to the community – (the amount they will have to hand over anyway) that by purchasing their 30% share, developers are duty bound by councils to sell this stock at reduce rate – thereby increasing their contribution to section 106. This was in contrast to the previous PC who saw 'affordable housing as non-viable' and somewhat of a ritualistic dance between developer and council. In contrast this PC saw that sometimes there was 'little incentive to provide affordable housing'. Policy intentions were underpinned by a focus on 'Mixed tenure' in which all communities were perceived to benefit, but it seemed to pose as a myth because of acts to exclude residents who were unable to contribute to the economy because of their economic circumstances (i.e. low income/ unemployed/ benefit claimants etc.)

Tackling social inequity – Talk about talking social inequity was based around a questioning the 'role of housing development in determining life chances'. Coupled with language surrounding 'the success of past regeneration schemes' it could imply that 'deprivation is no longer a problem' But Prominent policy objects under the 'right-to-buy' duty along with past regeneration schemes such as the 'inner estates action' could have been seen to have tackled many of the past ills of deprivation. Further, beliefs about social housing being unpopular coupled with the notion that most tenants who had purchased their property under the right to buy act, were in fact now 'owner occupiers' anyway, assists in legitimizing the need to focus in the city centres for economic development rather than areas of deprivation.

Problems – Policy objects which focus on retention of 'higher income communities' bringing money into an area excludes 'existing communities' requiring social housing. Beliefs about 'social housing being unpopular' negate the need for social housing. Adhering to policy objects such as 'demolition' perpetuates a need for 'housing market renewal' in clearing land for development, but creates a reduced availability in affordable housing.

3. **"Housing development is about balancing the needs of the economy"**

Housing for all - Within this policy community, a 'distinction was made between existing, future and investor communities', suggesting that they each had very different needs, and that the role of this PC was in 'balancing the needs of the economy' to meet these needs. Language such as 'improving the offer for future communities' and 'preventing middle class flight' was used to promote the need for investment in an area. This was supported through policy objects like 'demolition' in which the 'removal of properties was seen to

'increase investment in an area' and 'improve the area to outsiders'. This was contrasted with an understanding of the plight of 'existing communities' who's 'choices for accommodation were seen to be limited' and an acknowledgement that sometimes 'property is removed without community consent'.

Affordable housing – Interpretations of affordable housing were based around a need to provide 'housing for all'; supported by policy objects such as 'mixed tenure' which offered a range of options for different types of housing. But, paradoxically, actions were based around balancing a developers' need to make a profit from housing for private market sale, (which means selling to the highest bidder, which in turn means luxury accommodation), at the same time as making accommodation out of the reach of those seeking affordable accommodation. There was a shared experience of an 'individualistic attitude' amongst investors who were forced to maximize the profits on private housing developments in order to compensate for the loss from investing heavily in other parts of the city'. There was a shared experience of investors contributing to 'surplus empty properties in city centres'. This was contrasted further by discussion about 'surplus empty properties in areas of low demand' supported by objects such as 'demolition policy' at the same time as acknowledging a 'high demand for affordable housing but low supply.

Tackling inequity – Neutral language premised on a belief that 'opinions differ about the causes of deprivation' served to calm any dissonance between the competing discourses. Policy objects such as 'sustainable communities' and 'community cohesion' were used to support a belief that an holistic approach to housing development works best by tackling the broader isues of crime reduction and ASB, and inspiring communities to make bigger changes in their lives through 'seeing change around them'. An acknowledgment that past policy has 'helped right-to-buy owner-occupiers to improve their houses through government grants, which they otherwise wouldn't have had the means to do. At the same time, there was an awareness that in creating affordable housing within new developments, communities often had to leave secure tenancies re-apportion household budgets to account for higher rents. The negative impact of such actions on health and well-being were evident through a greater proportion of the household income on rent and potential debt.

PROBLEMS – They seem to be 'appealing to everyone' here, in recognizing the difficulties faced by all PC's. Linder (1995) suggests that in trying to 'meet all needs' with competing ideologies, is a basic impossibility, and is typical behavior of an agency wishing to 'appeal to all its interested communities'. Here we can see how 'using the right language' allows all interest groups to feel like they've been heard even if meeting all the needs is a physical impossibility. This is similar to one of the policy communities identified by Linder (1995) in which EMF is seen as 'a threat to public welfare'. In this interpretation, Linder argues that, while the aim is to respond to threats to the public's health and safety there is also a need to maintain the status quo for other interested parties. In managing the perceived threat they seek to 'keep everyone happy by 're-assuring the public" by imposing 'field-limits' in order to keep the voting public happy.

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4. **Housing development is about appropriate housing for existing communities (skewing the economic balance??)**

Housing for All - Instead of 'a high demand for affordable housing', this policy community talked about 'a high demand for appropriate housing'. Language centered around 'existing communities' rather than 'future communities', with some using the term 'vulnerable communities' to represent those with 'special housing need' such as young single people, or teenage parents with 1 child, those with no fixed abode (homeless), the elderly and those with physical, mental or learning disabilities. Where provision for 'crisis intervention' was abundant, there was a perceived shortage of 'appropriate housing' for such communities in the long term.

Affordable housing - Such language was supported by policy objects surrounding 'social housing' based on 'not everyone wanting to own their own property'. This was because affordable housing seemed to be interpreted as 'housing for private market sale', which in turn implied a 'lack of affordability'. This was fuelled by a shared experience of 'part-ownership schemes' and private renting which was seen to 'have a negative impact on

health'. Here there was shared experience of residents experiencing financial difficulty from entering into 'part-buy' schemes, which required a greater proportion of their household income. They also used language of 'displacement' where communities had been 'transferred to other parts of the city' because their housing need could not be met by the existing housing stock on the estate. In one development, this resulted in young single parents being moved to the same geographical area because of the availability of 1 and 2 bed properties, resulting in 'negative impacts on health' as a result of moving away from extended family. This represented a real paradox because the type of housing that was often in demand was 1 and 2 bedroom properties; the type which in city centre's represented an over-supply.

Tackling social inequality - It was no surprise that all of the actors within this policy community drew their experience from areas of 'low housing demand', which in turn appeared to be areas of largely social housing. But in contrast to other PC's, the prescribed solution was not demolition but in undertaking 'assessments of existing housing stock', with the intention of refurbishing existing properties for social renting. Interpretations of a high demand for 'appropriate housing', meant that when homes in so called 'areas of low-demand' were re-furbished, previously unpopular areas of housing suddenly became popular, creating a high demand for refurbished properties. This resulted in a waiting list developing in order to return to an area. For this reason, 'appropriate housing' can be taken to mean a metaphor for 'social welfare' in housing where 'existing communities' have 'special housing need'.

Conclusions

Different policy communities seem to use different language to describe different communities and their needs. The distinction between 'future', 'existing', 'investor' and 'vulnerable' communities along with 'special housing need' allowed policy communities to 'draw boundaries' around housing developments, thereby excluding certain communities from benefitting. Such acts are driven by policy objects such as 'demolition' which seek to clear land and make it available for new housing development.   This is in contrast to national and regional policy intention to provide 'housing for all'. Interpretations of 'affordable housing' represent somewhat of a myth; in acknowledgement of the 'lack of financial incentive' for developers to provide it.

In an environment where 'affordable housing is not viable', responsibility for providing 'social housing' becomes a popular alternative. This is perpetuated by a belief that it provides greater security of tenancy and shared experience of the negative impact of private renting through financial stress.   However, if this is contrasted by policy communities who believe 'social housing to be unpopular' and policy objects include a drive for more 'affordable housing through part-ownership and private rental, there is a clash of priorities. While such differences exist in the interpretation of social housing, objects and acts will be driven by competing ideologies to either arrest or expand the provision of social housing.

Differences in the language associated with deprivation resulted in some policy communities questioning the role that housing development might play in tackling social inequity. Skeptical beliefs were supported by policy objects which showed that either 'past approaches to regeneration' had been successful or 'conducting housing market appraisals' rather than 'housing need'. Such differences in the type of language permeated the field of housing-led regeneration, made worse by the partnership approach drawing organizations from across a wide range of disciplines and sectors. Such language dominated the 'prescribed course of action' by determining the choice of policy instrument to tackle the perceived problem. For those involved interested in 'expanding the market for future communities, this involved demolition and land clearance, while for those interested in developing 'appropriate housing' for existing communities, this involved 'assessment of existing stock' and 'refurbishment'.

Implications for PhD study

Regional coverage – setting the study within a regional context seems to works well. Not only is it useful in confining the study to a manageable and distinguishable area, the regional

infrastructure also allows the easy identification of agencies at a 'district level'. On this basis, situating my main study in the west midlands region, will allow me to identify a relevant sample.

Operationalising the research – Locating regional, district and local policy/ strategy documents is vital in getting 'a feel' for the organisations you're wishing to contact. It also highlights relevant language that you can use during recruitment and interview. One of the most challenging aspects of the pilot study was 'entering the world of housing' as an outsider – whilst this is this pertinent in itself from an interpretive perspective - it had the potential to prevent me from gaining access to the field if the sample failed to see me as credible. Thus, I had to work very hard to locate all the possible language relevant to 7 or 8 different types of organisations (Developers, URC's, Councils, and Regional Agencies etc) in order to secure an interview. Key documents are vital in overcoming this.

Getting a guide –-within the region is invaluable both in assisting with the recruitment of a relevant sample and snowballing contacts. Not only can they introduce you to networks it also provides credibility. I used a guide in 3 different organisations and recruited some 7 people in total, using this approach. Not only did it save time, it was also a great way of getting different perspectives from within the same organisation.

Arranging Interviews – It works well organizing 2-3 interviews on the same day to make use of the travelling time. I will also use a digital tape recorder instead of micro-cassettes which proved, at times to be unreliable. Where possible, I will arrange individual interviews to gain maximum commitment to truth. This is based on experience of doing a focus group with a housing partnership where its members seemed to be 'towing the party line' in the presence of the chief executive.

Wording of interviews – After spending much time adapting interview schedules, I realized that if I made the questions more generic, the questions had more relevance. This also allowed the sample to talk more freely, without me having made judgments about the situation (i.e. low demand/ high demand). I also noted the need for a rather more 'unstructured' interview than I had anticipated, again, allowing the sample freedom to talk within a flexible framework. This also made the interview more like a conversation, which aided honesty.

To record or not to record? - I trialed several different ways of recording interviews; tape recording them; taking copious notes; and taking annotated notes with interview. Only 1 participant did not wish to be interviewed, and the notes from this interview were sufficient but lacking in detail. On reflection, I think that taping interviews is best, owing to the need for detail in interpretive analysis.

Dual transcribing/ Analysis – Transcribing and doing the analysis at the same time worked tremendously well, allowing me to think very deeply about the interview at the same time as transcribing. Because it is time consuming, it's also a good way of engaging fully with the text, because of having to summarise the text and look for trends at the same time. It was in doing this that I developed summary sheets in recognition of the need to trace back to the original source later on as well as compared with other transcripts to track common trends.

Keep summary notes of interviews – During analysis, the summary notes I developed after each transcript were invaluable in developing the symbolism behind the language, objects and acts of policy communities. This is because it was easy to remind yourself of the key themes from each interview once you saw the summarised text. This allowed one to compare and contrast developing themes and ideas. Because interpretive analysis requires an immersion on the data, it takes time to develop a real sense of the data and what is really being said. The notes gave me the confidence to remember the essence of what had been said and they were often just enough to identify a particular word or phrase which, earlier, would otherwise have gone un-noticed.

The need to generate a story - I take on board Yanow's (2000) advice not to begin with an analytical framework looking for 'language, objects and acts' before one is truly immersed in the data. However, there is a distinct need for some structure or framework to organize the mass of data following transcribing of interviews. This I found probably the most frustrating part of all, being used to grounded theory approaches of 'coding up' and 'coding down', because it took ages for me to organise the data. Although as the researcher, one gets a feel for the basic story throughout data collection, there is a sense without some basic coding of the text there is no way of organizing this adequately to see any patterns. I decided then, that it is necessary for me to begin with some basic coding before moving onto considerations of what is being said here. The process of summarizing each interview enabled me to get a clear picture of each 'individual' perspective, which, later on, was easier to merge with other similar perspectives. This formed the basis of identifying the 'policy communities'.

Interpretive Sampling - Yanow's (2000) 'Policy, agency and community' provides a good mix from which to select a sample for interview and it will be useful to sample for the main study using this approach. I found the interpretive framework premised on asking questions of the data; equally useful:-

- which policy communities are there?
- how are they interpreting the debate differently?
- what problems arise as a result?
- what are the consequences?

Linder's (1995) discussion of differences in the problematisation of EMF has been invaluable in seeing how policy communities emerge with their 'different ways of seeing and doing'.

Keep reading! - As Yanow suggests, there is a real need to keep reading interpretive texts to generate a deeper understanding of the process. This in turn helps you to relate to your own data. Plus, other authors will have identified useful ways of organizing the data (like Linder 1995 who found 4 policy communities amongst the EMF debate. This paper was invaluable in showing me how the different interpretations were symbolic of higher order things such as 'paternalism'. I also saw how sometimes the debate overlapped, particularly with policymakers who, according to Linder, have a duty to 'cover all bases' with their potential interest groups (p224).

Keep reflecting! – Not only did I keep notes after each interview, during the analysis I also kept a log of what I was discovering. This helped me to reflect on what worked and what did not. It also means that any frustration I've already felt with the pilot study can be traced back to a step by step process about where to start and how to move forward with the analysis with confidence. A lack of a systematic approach to interpretive analysis is one of the things I feel is missing from all that I have read on the matter so far, because authors have not documented the process of analysis (Yanow has noted this too).

Keep writing/ organize written material – Although I had copious notes, reflections and summary sheets, I failed to organize them sufficiently. This meant that when I came to writing up my finding, trying to organize my thoughts for the report was extremely difficult and unnecessarily time consuming. I kept finding notes that I'd written by chance about certain issues, which were really useful but I couldn't actually locate them when I needed them! This concerned me for my main study in having much more data/ material to deal with and needing to organize it in a much better way.

Abbreviations

Housing Policy – Key documents

The Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) promoted new town developments and affordable housing, retaining key workers for the major cities through the Government's Starter Home initiative (Key worker scheme) which offers equity loans to key public sector workers in areas of high house prices and limited affordability.

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders HMRP's introduced by the architect Nevin, aimed to revive the housing market in areas of market failure. Notably termed as 'low demand', it refers to housing in unpopular areas which have been abandoned or are in a state of disrepair. In actual fact, statistics show that HMRP include around 1/5 of England's non-decent social housing. With some 500 million in funding, the aim was to 'build confidence in areas of social decline' by 'diversifying tenure and dwelling types' (check refs in Atkinson). Housing market renewal programmes are designed to improve housing stock in a poor state of repair either through refurbishment or demolition. Demolition offers the option of accommodation within a new development through various forms of tenure, this might include social renting through an ALMO or RSL, or the option to part purchase the property through shared ownership scheme, of which a percentage is paid for through a mortgage and the rest via rent paid to the social landlord.

Urban Regeneration Companies (URC) introduced in 2000, sought to acquire land through compulsory purchase in order to develop and (Atkinson says they resemble UDC's in maximizing fiscal policy). They are independent companies bringing together public and private sector investment. Aim to "engage private sector in a sustainable regeneration strategy in line with master plan for an area". They have a role in "stimulating new investment in areas of economic decline and physical development and coordinating plans for regeneration/ development". There are 20 URC's across England (and 3 of these are in the East Midlands Region). "strengthen cities economy through job creation and improve

the environment through targeted development". New developments operate on the basis of a certain percentage of housing being made available through affordable housing schemes; this is often referred to as section 106 and developers are duty bound to allocate a certain percentage of their new developments at non-market value, for RSL's to purchase and make available for part-ownership or rental.

The recent Sub-National Review (SNR) talks about changes to the regional structures which support regeneration. The aim is to improve GDP disparities by increasing economic development and productivity, by joining up the service provision on the front line and bringing power and decision making closer to the people. Changes through the SNR propose a greater role for RDA in housing, transport and planning a single strategy. In keeping with the RDA's wider goals expressed though the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), the intention is for the RDA to have a more streamlined role in targeting SE deprived areas by enhancing productivity.

Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) produced by the Regional Assembly with the aim of "contributing to the housing to wider regeneration agenda". Vision=a common framework for investment. Talks about "helping to create sustainable communities in which the housing needs and choices of all the people of the East Midlands can be met at a price they can afford". 6 key themes in RHS; affordability and access to housing; design, quality and sustainable homes; sustainable and cohesive communities; rural housing; housing for vulnerable people; planning for an ageing population. Objectives include ensuring that planning policies are underpinned by a 'robust understanding of need' to ensure that housing is accessible and affordable.   There are links within the RHS to the RES, through ensuring "long term growth for the region through increased productivity, ensuring sustainability and ensuring equity". Equally local and district housing strategy/ policies are meant to dove-tail into the RHS through assessing future need and priorities

Local Housing Strategy within the council oversees housing priorities [need to see housing strategy document] along with the maintenance of council housing stock. This may involve a retained ownership of the stock with the direct management of the stock being sub-contracted out to an arm's length management organisation or ALMO (policy doc and date??). Where council stock is completely transferred, this is both managed and owned by a registered social landlord or RSL.

APPENDIX B

Do you work in urban regeneration or housing development?

Are you interested in the impact that housing-led regeneration has on community well-being?

I am a researcher from the University of Birmingham undertaking a study into the connections between urban regeneration, housing development and community well-being across the East Midlands Region. I am particularly interested in how housing needs are balanced with the needs of the local economy.

If you work in any of the areas listed below and would like to take part in a 45 minute interview, please contact me via the details below:

Regional Housing/ Spatial Strategy
Planning & Design Consultants (Housing)
Local Authorities (Housing Strategy Development)
Housing Market Renewal Partnerships
Housing Providers (RSL's and ALMO's)
Urban Regeneration Companies
Community Regeneration Initiatives (i.e. NDC / NMP)

Interviews will be entirely confidential and completely anonymous. Interviews can be arranged at a time and place to suit you. Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.
For more information please contact:

Alyson Nicholds
Researcher
University of Birmingham,
Institute of Local Government Studies,
School of Public Policy,
Edgbaston,
Birmingham, B15 2TT,
Tel: (Mobile) [

Appendix C

STAGE 1 DATA COLLECTION: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (v6)

Intentions of housing led-regeneration policy

What do you <u>understand by the term</u> 'housing-led regeneration' policy (SCS/ RHS)? What does it have to say about housing priorities in the area?

<u>What does the policy mean</u> when it talks about 'affordability', 'housing for all' and 'vulnerable communities'?

How would you <u>describe the housing market in</u> your area in terms of needs and aspirations? What does it seek to achieve for different types of communities?

What <u>challenges does the area face</u> in terms of housing supply/demand?

What is the <u>subsequent impact on community well-being</u>?

Impact of housing-led regeneration on the well-being of communities

What impact do you think housing led regeneration has had in <u>meeting housing priorities?</u>

What types of communities have <u>benefited most</u>? And in what way?

Who, do you think <u>might have lost out</u> and in what way?

What are the <u>consequences for community well-being</u>, here?

Solutions to problems associated with housing-led regeneration

What are some of the <u>challenges associated with meeting housing priorities</u> through housing led regeneration?

What <u>factors contribute</u> to the problem?

To what extent do you see the <u>problem as part of policy design</u>? How could this be improved in order to improve community well-being?

What <u>barriers do you see as needing to be overcome</u> in order for the problem to be rectified? (what might stop housing led regeneration from being improved?) Policy opportunities?

STAGE 2 DATA COLLECTION: RECRUITMENT LETTER

PhD Study: Practitioner Perceptions of the Impacts of Regeneration in the West Midlands Region

Background to Research

Since Labour came to power in 1997, we have seen a plethora of Government Policy initiatives seeking to tackle the problem of poverty and social exclusion. *The Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan (2001),* set out the Government's vision that *'within 10 to 20 years nobody should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live'* (ODPM 2001). NR served as a blue-print for an array of regeneration delivery vehicles including LSP's (main partnership for delivering NR) and several ABI's including New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, based around tackling issues surrounding poor educational attainment, worklessness, health, crime and anti-social behaviour, housing and the prevention of homelessness and liveability. *The Sustainable Communities Policy (2003)* builds on the vision of NR ensuring that:-

"...people across the country, from all neighbourhoods, have a fair share in the nation's prosperity. We want everyone to enjoy living in a sustainable community – places which offer work, a home and a secure and attractive quality of life (ODPM 2003).

Recent changes to the regional infrastructure, following the *Sub-National Review* (2007) have placed a greater emphasis on regional agencies in implementing *Regional Economic Strategies* in pursuit of new and innovative ways of increasing the economic growth of deprived areas. Whilst Government recognise they are making progress, they acknowledge the *'significant challenges they still face and that they are still learning how delivery can be improved further'*(ODPM, 2004, NR: 4 years on). Despite an extensive programme of evaluation of regeneration by Government, studies of the impact of regeneration remain limited (Lawless 1989, Wilks-Heeg 1996, Roberts & Sykes 1999, Atkinson 2000a, Diamond & Liddle 2005). Those which have been done show a limited impact on health outcomes (Curtis et al 2002, Thomson et al 2006, Parry et al 2004) and the potential for unintended consequences to occur (Atkinson 2001, Curtis et al 2002, Thomson et al 2007, Nicholds 2007, Gosling 2008). In recognition of the need for such policy learning, this study seeks to identify the challenges that practitioners face in implementing regeneration policy; highlight the nature of positive and negative impacts they experience and how they manage these in practice. In seeking ways of improving the implementation of regeneration; what we can

learn from practitioner experience about the ways in which regeneration seeks to tackle poverty and social exclusion?

About the Research

The research will be conducted across 3 Case Study Areas in the West Midlands Region including the cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with fifty regeneration practitioners working in at a range of policy and front-line levels within Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives, Economic Development and Housing-Led Regeneration. Interview questions will seek to identify:-

Practitioners' understanding of the nature of the urban problem and the intentions of regeneration policy;

Practitioners' experience of how regeneration is implemented on the ground and the positive and negative impacts generated;

How any negative impacts are managed to improved delivery;

Interviews will take approximately 45 minutes, they will be entirely confidential, and take place at a place and time to suit individuals. With permission, they will be digitally recorded and later transcribed for the purposes of analysis. Data will be anonymous and stored in accordance with the data protection principles.

The research forms the basis of a 3 year full-time, ESRC funded, PhD study entitled: Building Capacity for Regeneration: Enhancing the Health Improvement Role of Regeneration Practitioners (Registered 2007-10). PhD Supervisors: Dr. Tim Freeman (Health Service Management Centre) and Prof. Tony Bovaird (INLOGOV), University of Birmingham.

For more information about this study, please contact: Alyson Nicholds, Doctoral Research Student, University of Birmingham, Institute of Local Government Studies, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT,Tel: (Mobile)   [email]

APPENDIX E

STAGE 2 DATA COLLECTION: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

About the intentions of regeneration policy in tackling deprivation…
I'd like you to think about what <u>regeneration policy means to you</u> in terms of tackling deprivation?
Which particular Government policies do you refer to, and what do you think <u>they aim to achieve in terms of outcomes for communities?</u>
What particular <u>challenges does your area face</u> in terms of addressing the social and economic needs of communities?
To what extent do you see deprivation as a problem in your particular area and what tools <u>do you see regeneration offering in tackling it?</u>

About the way regeneration policy has been delivered…
Keeping in mind regeneration's goals to tackle deprivation, what would you say has been your <u>experience of implementing</u> regeneration on the ground?
What in your opinion <u>has worked well ?</u> (please give examples)
What do you think <u>has not worked so well? And why?</u> (please give examples)
Who do you think has <u>benefited most from regeneration? And in what way?</u>
Is there anyone who you think <u>might have 'lost out' from regeneration? And in what way?</u>
Of those who may have 'lost out', what do you think <u>have been the consequences for well-being?</u>

About improving the delivery of regeneration policy…
What do you see, as some of the <u>challenges associated with tackling deprivation</u> through regeneration policy?
Where people may have 'lost-out' from regeneration, what are some of the <u>reasons people are giving in the field</u>, for these unintended consequences occurring?
To what extent do you see the <u>problem as part of policy design</u>? How could this be improved in order to improve community well-being?
What <u>barriers do you see as needing to be overcome</u> in order for the problem to be rectified?

1 **APPENDIX F**

2

3

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5 **I'd like you to think about what regeneration policy means to you, in terms of tackling deprivation,**
6 **what's your take on it? What's it set out to achieve?**

7 Well, I think what we're hoping to achieve and make ourselves achieve is [name of city] is a city of
8 heavy industry, was, most of that has gone. We've got a high rate of unemployment, especially
9 among white, young men and the idea of regenerating areas of the city and the city as a whole is to
10 attract businesses to the city for future employment, encourage people to start their own businesses
11 and actually we've got a lot of regeneration things here that are happening, such as the [name of
12 area], which was very much heavy work, industry work and we are building a new leisure centre,
13 which are insisting that people who are doing that build will employ local labour, where they can.
14 We're fortunate enough to have had £7 million from Government for training and we intend to link
15 that up with the regeneration projects that are going on. As well as the leisure centre, there is the
16 regeneration of the [name of area] urban village.

17 **Okay. Yes, I've heard of that.**

18 Which is, I mean, once that takes shape, will be fantastic for that area and there is regeneration
19 projects, such as this afternoon, we're having a meeting about, we've been promised some money
20 from Government. Unfortunately it's [Name Deleted] and he's been kicked out of the Government.

21 **Oh gosh.**

22 But we're hoping it's gone past him and it's gone to the Treasury. We're being promised £13 million
23 to build a new bus station and all the while this is going on, we're insisting that they take on local
24 labour. As [name of role], I wanted a charter for businesses for the city and for jobs, new working
25 and planning, so that we're more receptive to the customers who want to come and invest here, we
26 don't treat them as if they're of no account, which I'm afraid does happen in planning departments
27 and the buzz word at the moment is we're going to roll out the red carpet.

28 **Okay.**

29 That means the chief exec and the leader will talk to these businesses and...and if people come to
30 [name of city] and say we want to invest and then it doesn't happen, we want to track them and say,
31 well tell us why, so there's all sorts of things in that department that we're doing.

32 **Okay. What would you say is the overall aim of all this kind of activity?**

33 Well, to bring the city back to life.

34   **Yes.**

35   And for people to be able to afford a mortgage and own their own home, because we do need social
36   housing, but we also need owner occupiers who are not on big salaries or expense accounts.

37   **Yes.**

38   We need the mmm… everyone to be able to aspire to owning their own home, as well as having a
39   vibrant social housing policy.

40   **Yes. What would you say are some of the challenges that [name of city] face? You've touched on**
41   **them briefly here, but what are the challenges that [name of city] in particular faces, that you see**
42   **as trying to overcome, what are the problems?**

43   Education is the biggest one.

44   **Is it? Yes.**

45   One of the, well, it is the biggest one and housing, social housing. Unfortunately, that's not all
46   Government or city's fault. There's a lot of marriage breakdowns now, so you not only need one
47   house, you need two, so, but education is, to make people feel safe, I think they either believe or in
48   some cases it's fact, that there is a lot of lawlessness.

49   **Really?**

50   Mm-hmm. So we need to tackle that.

51   **Okay and how do you see, in what particular way do you see education as being a challenge? Can**
52   **you give me an example?**

53   I think, I think our education service don't, don't believe enough in the young people. They don't
54   push them enough and I don't think young children in [name of city] are thick, I think they're quite
55   capable of being taught, if they're inspired.

56   **Yes.**

57   And because they come from certain areas, they are not judged as being able to aspire to education
58   and I think that's wrong.

59   **And how do you think that, sort of, impacts on some of the problems of deprivation then?**

60   Well, they're turned off from education, they don't get the, if they get a job, it's the lower end of the
61   scale, it's what do you call it?

62   **Low skilled or unskilled.**

63   Unskilled, yes. They're unskilled, they get minimum wages and what have they got to look forward
64   to?

65   **Yes.**

66   They're very rarely going to get a council house and if they do, they're living on benefits. It's not the

67   right place to bring up children to be aware of what, the city they live is a good place to live.

68   **Yes. What's the kind of knock on effect then? I mean, I'm sure, it's sort of obvious, but what do**

69   **you see as the knock on effect for the children?**

70   Well, the knock on effect is that some of these estates are nothing more than sink estates and they

71   haven't got enough to look forward to.

72   **Yes.**

73   And these young people are not thick, they're just not being asked to achieve. They need pushing,

74   they've come from parents and grandparents who have been used to walking out of school at 15, 16,

75   right into a job, that was a good job. That's gone.

76   **Yes.**

77   They're walking out of school now not able to get a job or if they do, it's a rubbish job. They could go

78   into factories, they could go to British Steel,[name of local company], you name it, we had it, so

79   there isn't, in their families, there isn't an idea that education matters, it's got to be built up and it

80   means that the schools have got to do more. You can't just leave it to the parents, who haven't got

81   that philosophy and that background, have they?

82   **Okay. So you see them as not aspiring, if you like, at school and then that, kind of, perpetuates…?**

83   They have a foot put on them and they think they aren't any good. Some areas of town, like the

84   south west, the parents will bite your head off if you don't give the best to their children, but in

85   some areas, they don't have that. They don't have…

86   **So there's a lack of demand, if you like, for that?**

87   Yes.

88   **Okay.**

89   There's a lack of expectations, isn't there?

90   **Yes, okay and you talked about the, sort of, impact and the knock on effect on children. You said**

91   **that if they turned off from education, they get a low skilled or an unskilled job and then no wage,**

92   **how do you see that as, kind of, feeding into deprivation? What's your understanding of when**

93   **people are in that position?**

94   If they, if they're not inspired by a job that's meaningful, then they, they're more likely to get into

95   trouble.

96   **Yes.**

97   Mar… mmm, well not even marry, but have children very young. We've got, mmm, quite a high

98   pregnancy, under age pregnancy rate, mmm, so it, it, it does affect their lives, they've, they've got

99   babies at, I mean, they do love them and they bring them up, but they're only babies themselves

100   really at 16 and younger than that sometimes.

101   **Yes.**

102   When I think back about my [member of family], they're still babies in their forties, so they need,

103   they need time to be young people and young adults, without the cares of the world putting on

104   them and having a baby does, it's frightening for anybody.

105   **Yes. Yes and the, sort of, the deprivation, kind of, angle, how do you see that as affecting them?**

106   **What problems are they then facing?**

107   Well, they're, they will get the worst housing, won't they?

108   **Mm-hmm.**

109   They'll live in some of the areas that are not, well, I don't think they're good enough for their

110   children. They will have bad housing, they will smoke and drink more, mmm, so I think it's

111   important that we have facilities for them, leisure facilities and we encourage them to use them,

112   mmm, but it is more difficult, they tend to gang up and if the boss of the gang says, how stupid to

113   get education and get ahead, they tend to follow the leader.   A lot of them come from broken

114   homes.

115   **Yes and what do you mean by that, what's a broken home to you?**

116   Well, a broken home is where the mother and father have split up and they're passed from pillar to

117   post. In some cases, they're not needed in either one or the other households. Sometimes there's

118   new babies come along, so their gang is their family.

119   **Yes, okay.**

120   Sometimes it's positive. A lot of the time, it's negative. Drugs are a bit of a problem.

121   **Yes. How do you see them as being a problem?**

122   Well, I mean, they destroy lives and…

123   **Yes, a problem particular to deprived areas, do you think?**

124   Well, not necessarily, but there is a lot of it in there because they are without, as they see it, without

125   a future, so they are targeted by drug gangs, so they become involved in selling it, if not using it.

126   **Okay.**

127   Then they get records, don't they?

128   **Yes and the whole, sort of, crime thing that you're on about, yes. Okay, that's really useful, thank**

129   **you. Can I ask you then, you've mentioned quite a lot there about, kind of, cycles of deprivation,**

130   **how people become deprived and how that impacts on them. What do you then see as**

131 **regeneration's job, if you like, to tackle that? How does it intend to work? As a policy, what does**
132 **it try to do?**

133 Well, I mean, one of the things is to raise the image of the city, so that it's a vibrant city and people
134 want to live here.

135 **Yes.**

136 Two is the idea that people do count. The services should be geared to them in a proper, meaningful
137 way, that they feel wanted. I think the voluntary sector could do a lot more to encourage them.

138 **In what way?**

139 They could get out into the schools. I don't think the churches do enough. I think they sit in their
140 ivory towers and in some cases, they're good, in others, they don't do, as I see it, the job that they
141 should be doing and that is giving leadership and I think leadership is one of the main things we
142 need.

143 **Okay.**

144 And that can come from the city council. It can come from the services. We've got [number of]
145 councillors. They should be doing the job of making their areas feel that they're listened to and
146 wanted.

147 **Yes.**

148 There's a lot of councillors have got different ideas, some like the title, some like it as a little job after
149 they've retired and some are very, very keen to get things done.

150 **Does that make it difficult, do you think, to co-ordinate a, sort of, sense of leadership?**

151 I think it's hard to motivate councillors who've got the idea that it doesn't matter, once you're a
152 councillor that's it.

153 **Yes.**

154 And I think you need to encourage people to take an active interest in politics. I don't consider it a
155 dirty word. I think politics makes your life and your world go around.

156 **Yes, yes. Do you think then that that's a kind of barrier? Do you think a lot of people do see it as**
157 **not being their business?**

158 I think they talk about it, they talk about it, but when they actually meet with you and there's a
159 specific problem, they do depend on you, so in theory, they say we're a load of rubbish and we've
160 got our noses in the trough and all that, as a blanket, but when you meet them separately and in
161 groups, they are much more amenable to the fact that you can…

162 **Local people, you mean?**

163   Yes, local.

164   **Yes.**

165   And they do respect you and realise that you are trying to do what you can for them in areas, so I
166   think, mmm, it's like everything else in life, individually, they respect you and want your help and
167   appreciate the help you give them, even if it doesn't always turn out 100%, but as a blanket group,
168   we're a load of rubbish.

169   **Yes. Do you think that's the general perception?**

170   That's just the… I think it's an immediate reaction to us, especially after what they've been doing up
171   in London. They tar us with the same brush.

172   **Yes. Has that had an impact?**

173   I mean, in actual fact, councillors put in a lot of hours, if they do their job properly?

174   **Yes. Do you think that's had an impact at a local level, the expenses thing?**

175   I think some people probably think that we are, but I mean, we don't get anything like that.

176   **No.**

177   But I think they think we're living off the fact of the land, yes and, mmm, some councillors are,
178   because they're taking the money without doing a lot, so there is some put a kernel in there, but
179   most of your colleagues, both sides, well, all three sides, we've got three parties, they are very good.

180   **Yes, okay. So you see regen, you said that it's about raising the image of the city and that people**
181   **do count, how do you see it as specifically tackling deprivation? What's your, how do you**
182   **understand that? How does that, kind of, equate with the deprivation problem that we've just**
183   **talked about?**

184   Well, I think we're building schools for the future and we're running with that very seriously and
185   those academies are going into areas that have been less than successful.

186   **Yes.**

187   We are building up the exam position. We are using jobs for apprenticeships. We've got a lot more
188   apprenticeships than we used to have. It went through a very fallow period and I think to have an
189   apprenticeship is a very essential part of young people and they don't all aspire to go to university.

190   **No, no.**

191   So to have a good apprenticeship and good training is, is essential.

192   **Okay.**

193   And the actual buildings themselves need regenerating, but it's not just about building, it's about the
194   people who live, it's about the elderly feeling that they're still useful and listening to them and

| 195 | fighting on their behalf for decent pensions and services. They've given their life to this country |
| 196 | through a world war etc and I think pensions, in most cases, are abysmal. |

197   **Yes. Do you see, yourself, the elderly as being a particular kind of group that needs to be targeted**
198   **for…?**

199   Mm-hmm.

200   **Okay. Okay, that's great. If we could move on then to, we've talked a bit about how regen, sort**
201   **of, seeks to tackle deprivation, if you like what the problems are and how it seeks to tackle that,**
202   **what's been your experience actually of delivering regen policy? How's it gone?**

203   Well, we haven't been as...we haven't been as good at it as some of our neighbours, particularly
204   [name of city].

205   **Yes.**

206   Now, whether that's our fault or Government perceive [name of city] as this big place that they've
207   got to gear to more than anywhere else, I think what it, a lot of it is that Governments, they go
208   through phases and they'll say, we're going to give a load of money for new houses and there's a big
209   splash in the papers and they're all on television talking about it and then nothing happens, it goes
210   dead, so you say, well, what happened to that money that they were promising for? Oh well, we
211   haven't heard anything yet and it's all far too slow and you do have to have Government money.
212   Now, at the moment, we're in a credit crunch, so we're not getting much from the private sector.
213   They're in serious trouble. Our sales of land have just bottomed out.

214   **Really?**

215   We've got, we have got a 20, no, sorry, £288 million the Government gave us two years ago, for
216   housing, decent homes, because the city has, [name of city] has got a large council estate almost
217   surrounding it. Every ward except one has got council homes in it as an estate. It's in, like, a circle
218   and they haven't been touched for years and years, so Government did give us £288 million, which
219   sounds a lot, but it's nowhere near enough, so we're implementing a policy on kitchens, bathrooms
220   etc.

221   **Yes.**

222   Now, we were doing very well by putting money of our own into it from land sales. Well, of course,
223   they've stopped, haven't they? So we were using some of our money for environmental purposes
224   outside the homes, street scenes etc, so we're in trouble with that at the moment, but we have had
225   that sort of money for, mmm, and we are doing quite a lot with it. We're being as frugal as we can
226   with it.

227   **Yes. When you say about the street scene, I don't understand, you were using that as well to do**
228   **the outsides?**

229   Yes. Well, we were using our, I mean, we could sell £2 million or £3 million for a piece of land.
230   That's gone. We're not selling that at the moment. When it does start up again, which I'm sure it
231   will, we're going to start again, when the bankers get the money from under the bed.

232   **Yes. It's all gone a bit wrong hasn't it? Yes.**

233   Yes.

234   **Okay. What do you think has worked, when you think about regeneration policy in particular,**
235   **what do you think has worked particularly well and why?**

236   I think all the council has signed up to it. All the councillors, they want to see it done. We've set up
237   a…

238   **Signed up to regeneration?**

239   Mm-hmm. We've set up a development, [name of city] Development Company, which is…

240   **Oh yes, I interviewed, mmm, [Name Deleted].**

241   Yes. Well, we set that up, well, the other, previous administration, but with our support. We set
242   that up. Of course, they're stuck at the moment, but they are still doing an awful lot of work. We
243   need a good transport policy, which is, we are signing up to having the metro through the city, to
244   come from [name of city] down to the station and back round again, we're hoping that, it's going to
245   take five years, but that's nothing really in the local authority.

246   **No.**

247   It is really about, I want to do things yesterday, but it gets frustrating, but we have done quite a lot
248   of work and what we want to do is to make sure that work goes as local as we can possibly get it.

249   **Yes. What do you think of, have you got any examples for me about, sort of, specific projects or**
250   **programmes that you think has worked well and…?**

251   Oh yes. The one that I haven't mentioned is the [name of local project], which is a project backed by
252   Government for an area of the town that was very deprived…

253   **Is that the New Deal for Communities?**

254   Yes. They're up massive, big tower blocks. Now, there's only one left. That's worked ever so well.
255   They've got a beautiful park, they've got people who get out there and get people with them,
256   exercising and they've got a public arena for theatres etc for the young and the old, mmm, they've
257   got a new school and they're not cheap nowadays.

258   **No.**

259   And they've got a community centre coming on board and a, they're the first ones that we've built
260   that are eco friendly homes, those are brilliant. All the heating is from little wood chips in a boiler
261   house for heat.

262 **Sustainable heating.**

263 Yes, very and it feeds, so we're going ahead with more of those as fast as we can and then one of the
264 smaller projects, but by no means the least important is the, on ring road, which shows you into
265 the town, is the, mmm, [name of hotel], it was a hotel and it's now the archives and you can see that
266 if you look out the windows. That is, mmm, well, it's mostly Georgian, but if was before then it was
267 built and it was in, it was wrecked. It was a hotel and it was doing no good. So we did get public
268 money, as well as our own, to do that and it really does look brilliant.

269 We're trying to get down the [name of road]. We've got plans. We're trying to get down the [name
270 of road] for improving the route there, so that from the north of the country, they can get into
271 [name of city] easier and then one of our biggest projects, which has slowed down because of the
272 credit crunch, is what we call [name of inward investment project].

273 **Oh yes, I've heard about this, yes. What's the thinking behind that, [Name Deleted], what's the**
274 **aim of it and…?**

275 Well, it's a beautiful big shopping centre that looks, will look, if you go into Dudley, which I, the
276 Merry Hill Centre, I wasn't really very enamoured with it, but my [member of family] drags me there
277 and it is beautiful. I mean, it's airy and light and you've got all the shops. You've got very good
278 shopping, as well as shopping that is good for everybody's purse. I was dragged into Disneyland
279 shop yesterday, came out a lot poorer because of my [member of family]. I mean, it is, there's cafés
280 outside, as well as in and we wanted more…

281 **This is Summer Row?**

282 This is want we [name of local development], yes. That's what we want, so that it's, mmm, really
283 more of an iconic building.

284 **Okay.**

285 It's going to take longer than we thought. We've got all the plans. We've been, we've got all the
286 planning up to the mark and, but it's just that we've got to get some private money to develop it and
287 that's taking more time and the, if the credit crunch had have been a little bit later, we would have
288 been up and running.

289 **Yes, sure.**

290 But it is and of course, we've got to watch that area of town, mmm, it's more to the south of the
291 city, that it's, it doesn't become, mmm, poor to look at, because we have, we've been talk, we've
292 been doing, getting the land together.

293 **Okay.**

294 So that will be a big project for us.

295 **Yes.**

296   Then there's the, what we call the [name of local development]. That's around the station and that
297   is leisure, housing, new bus station, trams go down there. Mmm… I think that's got a better chance.
298   We've got, as I say, the minister gave us the promise of £13 million to redo the bus station and I
299   think once that's done, it will attract money from other sources to do the [name of local
300   development].

301   **Yes. Is that the aim, do you think, to kind of stimulate this, so that other people will invest in, yes?**

302   That's right, yes. If they see that it's actually having money to that degree, then it should, if, well,
303   the developers are good, they're called Neptune, they've done a lot in Liverpool. If they can sell
304   themselves, we're behind them, trying to do what we can.

305   **Yes.**

306   So that's a private development with us. We've got to do a lot more with business. We can't go it
307   alone.

308   **Would you say that's an issue at the moment then, that you're not doing enough with the private**
309   **sector?**

310   We're not doing enough, because they can't get hold of the money either. They're only, they're
311   raring to go and so are we. We just need the credit crunch, I mean, there is a few signs that it's
312   getting better, but not enough yet and that, you see, creates jobs. It creates the facilities to sell your
313   goods. It's all knock on good stuff, isn't it?

314   **Yes. I was going to say, what's your, what's the sort of underpinning goal, if you like, of all these**
315   **developments, in terms of tackling deprivation?**

316   Well, they all interact with each other, don't they?

317   **How do you see them as tackling deprivation in your [inaudible 30:18]?**

318   Well, it would be, mmm, it would be the facilities that are there, the jobs that are there and if it's a
319   viable city, you're getting more from people, council tax wise…

320   **Yes, okay. That's interesting.**

321   And that can then be put into services and you can also use some of your money for, mmm, tackling
322   alcoholic related issues, which is another issue in a town like this.

323   **Is it? Yes.**

324   And then, and I've touched on the drugs… and general wellbeing.

325   **Mm-hmm.**

326   And that's where your health services come in, but it's no use them coming in when it's too late, you
327   know, when you're in your wheelchair and you're, we've got to be processing that from cradle
328   upwards, I think.

329 **Sure, yes. Of the, kind of, the alcohol and the drug issues, where do you think that's, sort of,**
330 **coming from? Is that a particular problem for [name of city]?**

331 I think it's a lack of jobs, a lot of it and the areas that they're living in.

332 **Okay.**

333 Mmm… We've got some very good people on the streets, I've forgotten what they call themselves.

334 **Are they average people…?**

335 No, we've got people who actually go around on Friday evenings, because there's quite a, there's
336 quite an evening culture.

337 **Oh okay, yes.**

338 And some of them are very young, under age drinking etc. Oh, what are they called? … In any case,
339 they are part of a church and they do…

340 **Oh okay. Like, what, offering support?**

341 They're like guardians and they, they look out for people and they've got areas where, if you've been
342 dehydrated with all your head banging etc, you, they'll take care of you and see that you get home
343 etc, so that's a good, good thing to happen. Mmm… Because [name of city] has got quite a night,
344 not as big as [name of city], of course, but it's pretty active.

345 **Yes, okay and have the people who you say, the knock on effect of the, the lack of drugs, lack of**
346 **jobs [Laughter] Lack of drugs… Mmm… what's the, what are some of the other impacts, do you**
347 **think on, on people and families, in terms of lack of jobs?**

348 Well, I think it leads… lack of jobs?

349 **Yes.**

350 Well, it leads to everything, doesn't it? It leads to you losing your homes, losing your wife and family
351 as they go off back home and men go off, because they're so desperate, mmm… I think it leads to
352 debt, terrible debt and repossessions… and it leads to turning to drink, in a lot of cases.

353 **Yes and do you think…?**

354 So it's the full gamete, isn't it?

355 **Yes.**

356 Everything affects them.

357 **Do you think that's, mmm, always been a problem here or is it becoming worse or…?**

358 I think when the city was, like, a work horse for the Midlands, it used to produce, they drank heavy,
359 but they were, I think it's miserable, alcoholism nowadays. They used to have a drink in the old days

360 because they'd worked hard, but it always, smoking is an issue, especially in deprived areas, that…
361 other people seem to take care of themselves better. So, mmm, but I think it's getting worse at the
362 moment because of the credit crunch.

363 **Yes.**

364 But there are a lot of areas in the city that are very beautiful. I mean, there's, especially in the south
365 west and north east, there's a lot. But [name of local area], it's lovely, yes and we have got a
366 common. It's lovely, [name of local area], beautiful. We've got some lovely old, very old pubs.
367 We've got a big immigration, mmm, area.

368 **Have you?**

369 Yes. We've got a lot… one of the largest areas.

370 **I didn't know that.**

371 Sikhs.

372 **Okay.**

373 We've got… one of the, I think it's the second biggest in the country, a Sikh temple, massive, some of
374 them are. We've got quite a few Ind… Muslims. They're, no, I mustn't call them temples, they have,
375 what do you call them?

376 **Mosques.**

377 That's better. I always get them mixed up.

378 **Well.**

379 Now, there was a lot of trouble a few years ago, but that's calmed down and they are… they do
380 produce some very positive things for the city.

381 **Okay. Mmm… We've talked a bit about, sort of, what's worked well, what do you think, or are**
382 **there any areas where you think, where you think things haven't worked so well and why, in**
383 **terms of regeneration?**

384 Mmm… Well, I think where money has been spent, it's been spent well… I think you have to keep
385 an eye on people who have grants from you, that they are doing the job they promised to do.

386 **Yes.**

387 But I can't think of any major upset. No, I can't.

388 **Do you feel, mmm…**

389 I don't think we've had half enough money, actually. That's the biggest problem.

390 **No, I mean, we'll come on to that in a minute.**

391 We've used it, we've used it very frugally, what we have had.

392 **Yes. How do you think regeneration is going as a kind of policy? Is it tackling the things that you**
393 **think need tackling?**

394 Well, it would, if we can get the money. We have to keep lobby Government and of course, they're
395 in a state of flux at the moment.

396 **Yes. So it's a money issue?**

397 But we do, we get money for training and business, we could do with some more small business
398 grants. One of my major things, when I came in, was that we didn't have enough to do with
399 business, so that's why I wanted the charter and the planning to change their attitudes and actually
400 go out and get people into the city and that's what we've, mmm… we set up the, mmm, [name of
401 city] Development Company for. We have, we now have regular meetings with business, they come
402 in at about half seven, so that they can go out and work, you know and that has built up, we're going
403 to set up a small business unit, mmm… small businesses, as well as being not too big, to have a look
404 at what's going on in the small business world, what we can do.

405 **How do you see that as helping to tackle deprivation?**

406 Well that, that, what we're going to do and I've just signed it off, we're going to, mmm, we're going
407 to put in, mmm, what do you call it? It's a unit where, it's a one stop shop… as near to this, The Civic
408 as we can get it. I'm hoping we can get it into The Civic, where that will give all the information to
409 businesses and investors in one place, rather than sending them off everywhere and you've sent
410 them to the wrong place.

411 **Is that what happens now?**

412 Well, it can do with business, you know, it's just… it's all disparate and…

413 **Yes.**

414 So, mmm, I'm hoping for big things for that, for a one stop shop… and you would go in and you'd
415 say, oh I want to see something, someone from planning and you could see them and that's where
416 I'm saying that bus… and after care service as well, for businesses. We must, we must be more
417 proactive with business, because they are one of the most important things, aren't they? We can
418 do, we can get grants from government for social work and all that sort of business, but to make the
419 city thrive, you've got to take care of business and we haven't done that.

420 **Yes… and how…?**

421 Not enough.

422 **How do you see…?**

423 They've done well in spite of us, not because of us.

424 **Yes. How do you see that linking back to some of the problems that we were talking about in**
425 **terms of tackling deprivation?**

426 Well, I think it will.

427 **Where does the business role fit in?**

428 Yes. I think, well, I think they will, because they want to make money. We want to create jobs.
429 We're going to make it as easy as we can for them…

430 **Yes, so direct…**

431 And make them feel that we want them, not as it's been in the past, well, you can come if you want
432 to, we shall just carry on and it… well, you can't, you've got to, you've got to involve the business.

433 **You want to make a concerted effort?**

434 Yes. Then of course, we've done well with the [name of local football club], haven't we? They'll
435 bring quite a lot in, because they've gone up to the premier division.

436 **Really?**

437 Oh yes. They've gone to the top of the tree.

438 They bring in, I think it was something like £30 million a year.

439 **Really?**

440 For a premier division team.

441 **Gosh… and how does that benefit the city, just in terms of provision…?**

442 Well, the hotels and the provisions, they have a lot more at the match. In fact, they are, mmm,
443 going to expand the grounds.

444 **Okay. I suppose they can afford to if they move up, can't they?**

445 Well, they do, because they get this money from…

446 **The Football Association.**

447 The Football Association or yes, the leagues, don't they?

448 **Yes.**

449 Yes and it does bring a lot into the city… and that gives you a feeling of, mmm, wellbeing, doesn't it,
450 when you've, well, it does for me.

451 **So who do you think, when you think about regeneration policy, who do you think has benefited**
452 **most from it?**

453   Mmm… Well, I think… well, can we say that, before we get to that specifically, [name of city] has got
454   quite a lot going for it. It's got a Victorian theatre, we've spent a lot of money on that, mmm… a few
455   years ago, but that benefits everybody really and they come from all over the area because there's
456   very few of them left now, if you think about it, a 1,300 seater. Mmm… We've got a horse track and
457   that was invested in some years ago and that's, mmm, whatever your opinion of gambling is, they do
458   have good nights down there for people, so there's that.

459   **Yes.**

460   Culturally, there's, mmm, there's quite a lot going on. We've got a dog track, mmm, we've got the
461   Civic Hall, which has got a past muster for, mmm, putting on a lot of, mmm… bands etc. It's not a
462   massive venue, but it's a good one and we've got a very vibrant outdoor events (stand?). I mean, we
463   had a, at the weekend, we had a big steam engine rally down at the [name of local area], so we do
464   quite a lot of that. So culturally, we are very active.

465   **Yes.**

466   Mmm… So, the [name of local project], which was, which I've mentioned in the [name of area], that
467   has been towards people in deprived, that was deprived areas. Areas, mmm, on the south west side
468   haven't had as much, because they don't need it. They're, sort of, they're good houses, the schools
469   are good, because they keep an eye on what's going on at school, you know, they wouldn't allow…
470   so, mmm, I think most of the money has gone towards the deprived areas.

471   **Mm-hmm… and when you think about who has benefited, as opposed to, kind of, who may have**
472   **lost out, are there any, sort of, people that you think it's missed?**

473   Mmm… Well, I mean, my thing is education… and I do think that's most important for the deprived
474   areas. On the other hand, they do need to come out into the areas and have some greenery, which
475   regeneration does provide. They need somewhere to go and they need play areas for the young
476   ones. Mmm… I think our services for the elderly are… they're… they could do with a lot more
477   money spent on them.

478   **Yes.**

479   But I think, mmm… and of course, we're suffering from, mmm, our population's going down…
480   mmm… and that's make a difference. We've got the university, that's very positive. That takes in a
481   lot of people who wouldn't normally aspire. So I think really, we are doing… we're being very
482   positive and forward looking.

483   **You feel quite positive about how it's working, yes?**

484   Yes, I do, I do now.

485   **If, mmm, there's any kind of aspect of policy that you think could work better, what, what would**
486   **you say that might be, in regeneration, obviously?**

487 I think the biggest thing that happens when you come into run a city like we have, we've done 12
488 months, because the, the, the previous administration had been there for nearly 30 years…

489 **Oh okay, I didn't realise that.**

490 I think, well, it was only a couple of, three years out of that 30 that, where they weren't in control. I
491 think they get complacent and lazy and I'm not blaming them specifically, I think everybody would.

492 **Sure.**

493 Mmm… and I think you, as the controlling group, must have good policies that you pass on to the
494 administration to implement and not the other way around.

495 **Yes.**

496 Listen to them, because they've got some, but they need shaking out of their comfort zone after 30
497 years.

498 **Yes. When you say the administration, do you mean the, kind of, officers?**

499 The officers.

500 **Really?**

501 They don't like it, in some cases. They want to do it in their own tin pot way, because… our council
502 tax needs to be targeted to the people who need it and not big monoliths inside this building and I
503 think after 30 years, they needed a change and they've got it… mmm, which I think that's one of the
504 biggest issues, is they get complacent and oh, we've always done it like this, we can't do it any other
505 way… and I think you have to look outside the box to give value for money, which is very important,
506 mmm, where you say, can we do this with the private sector better than we can keeping it in-house?
507 Now, we're starting to look at that.

508 **Okay. Where would you say, mmm… where would you say policy doesn't work so well? Where**
509 **are you, kind of, really constrained by policy, in terms of regeneration delivery?**

510 Money is one of the things that we could do with, the money. I think you need to get together
511 more, to explore the possibilities and we do… we, [name of lead political party] always had, a group
512 policy document, that was when we were in, this is when we were in control, but we've always had
513 one of that. We always produced one of that, one of those, every year and we used to send those
514 out to anybody who wanted it, so I think it's even more important to do that now, to actually state,
515 so that there's no misunderstanding.

516 **Mm-hmm. And when you say about the, you're sort of constrained by money, what, what do you**
517 **mean by that?**

518 Mmm… Well, you're having to look over your shoulders for every penny at the moment, because of
519 the credit crunch. Mmm… and you do, I mean… for your housing policy, we need, we've got a policy
520 and we've got plans, but we need Government to (pump prime us?), because we can't do it on our

521 own, we haven't got enough. That's in housing, education, as I say, we're already having, building
522 schools for the future and that's coming from Government, but, mmm, everything grinds so slowly.

523 **Okay.**

524 And as I say, they make a big thing of these, mmm, policies in the paper and then nothing happens. I
525 mean, they said, we, we… we were constrained by what we could charge, because although we've
526 got the almost which run the house, our houses, they're still ours, so we're responsible for setting
527 the rents.

528 **Yes.**

529 So we set the rent at over 6%, which was, but that was because Government said we'd got to, so
530 you're constrained by what Government tell, they do tell you what to do, in a lot of cases, then they
531 come along and say, well, because, mmm, though getting fright, I mean, it was political, in any case,
532 they halved that rent rise, the Government did, well, nothing's happened yet and that was, mmm,
533 May, mmm, April, sorry. We've gone through May, we're going through June. Now, they put it up,
534 they blast it in the press, so people think that their increase in their rent is going to happen today,
535 but it doesn't, it's going to be probably the autumn before anything happens. That's what annoys
536 me is they make, give people expectations and then it takes forever to do it.

537 **Okay.**

538 Lack of will.

539 **Yes.**

540 Or they've got no money either. You wouldn't know, would you?

541 **Yes. [Laughter]. If you had to, mmm, sort of, do a blue sky thinking about how all of this could be**
542 **improved, where would you say it could be improved?**

543 If I was king for a day, that would be it? [Laughter].

544 **Yes.**

545 Well, I think, mmm, I think, really getting to Government to agree to step up the, the pace of
546 allowing us change.

547 **So it's the pace of change that's an issue for you, yes?**

548 Yes.

549 **And do you feel particularly constrained by the way that the policy's designed, if you like?**

550 Well, you do get, mmm, you do get frustrated. On the other hand, you, I don't know whether… you
551 can change things, but you have to keep at it. You can't afford to get down or… you've got to keep
552 positive.

553   **Yes.**

554   And you've got to keep thinking of new ways of doing things.

555   **Yes, okay. I'll just check that I've not, mmm… okay. No, that's fine. Mmm… Is there anything**
556   **that I haven't asked you that you'd like to comment on?**

557   I can't think of it. I'll probably think of it as soon as you go.

558   **That's alright. Well, do email me if you do think of anything else, because I don't mind.**